

## Sudanese opposition leader dies in Egypt

CAIRO (AFP) — Senior Sudanese opposition leader General Fathi Ahmad Ali died Monday from a heart attack in the northern Egyptian city of Alexandria, opposition officials here said. General Ali, the 65-year-old vice-president of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA), was visiting his family in Alexandria at the time of his death, said NDA spokesman Abbas Al Fiqqi. Gen. Ali commanded the Sudanese armed forces between 1986 and 1989 during the period when Sudan was headed by democratically-elected Prime Minister Sadeq Al Mahdi — currently the leader of the northern Sudanese opposition. The Cairo-based NDA is allied with the southern Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) in a bid to topple the regime of President Omar Al Bashir, with fighting taking place in the north as well as the south.

# Jordan Times

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## Saudi beheaded for drug smuggling

RIYADH (AFP) — A Saudi national was beheaded Monday in eastern Saudi Arabia after being found guilty of trying to smuggle drugs into the conservative kingdom, the Interior Ministry said. Hamad Ben Mohammad Al Dossari, who was caught trying to smuggle hashish into the country, was executed by sword at Al Ihsa, a ministry statement carried by the official SPA news agency said. Dossari became the 21st person to face the death penalty this year in Saudi Arabia, which strictly applies Islamic law. Saudi Arabia applies the death penalty to those found guilty of murder, rape, armed robbery and drug smuggling. They are usually executed in public squares after midday prayer on Friday. In 1996 a total of 68 people were executed, according to official figures, while in 1995, a record 191 faced the death penalty in the kingdom.

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## Crown Prince, Moratinos discuss Jordan-EU cooperation to rescue stalled Middle East peace process

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan Monday discussed with European Union (EU) special envoy to the Middle East peace process Miguel Moratinos ways of reviving the peace process and overcoming obstacles in its way.

At the meeting attended by Foreign Minister Fayez Tarawneh, the two sides stressed the need to coordinate positions and stimulate the peace process in order to achieve a just, comprehensive and durable peace.

Crown Prince Hassan underlined the need to emphasize the humanitarian dimension, which he said should reflect positively on people's living standards, differentiating between issues of daily or temporary nature and those requiring a long-term final solution.

Prince Hassan welcomed Europe's role in the peace process as an effort complementing that of the United States.

Mr. Moratinos said the EU was seeking common ground to stimulate the peace process on all tracks. He added that Europeans are committed to the removal of obstacles confronting the peace process and carrying out its efforts in coordination with the U.S.

Mr. Moratinos reaffirmed EU's backing for the Kingdom's endeavours in the peace process in appreciation of Jordan's positive role. Mr. Moratinos then



His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan meets EU special envoy to the Middle East, Miguel Moratinos, on Monday (photo by Yusef 'Allan)

stressed that the EU was keen on developing economic cooperation with Jordan and backing the country's endeavours in the water sector.

Discussion covered matters related to the Jordanian-European partnership which was talked of in Malta recently.

Mr. Moratinos also met on Monday Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali who stressed the importance of Europe's role in achieving a comprehensive peace.

Speaking in the presence of Dr. Tarawneh and Deputy prime minister Jawad Anani, the Prime Minister said that peace has become a world strategy and does not concern a certain region nor is it subject

to the whims of any single party.

Dr. Majali said the time has come to ending the state of war in this region which has long suffered so that the peoples of this region can live in security and peace.

Emerging from these meetings Mr. Moratinos told Jordan Television: "We are working very closely now with the United States and before coming here I had a meeting with my colleague Dennis Ross who is coming to Jordan and to tour the region very soon to share the ideas and proposals with the peace makers, to bring back the peace process to the principle of Madrid and the principles of Oslo."

Dr. Tarawneh told Jordan Television: "Now there is a better realization of the importance of the European role in the peace process. Europe has been active from the outset and now it is joining forces with all peace supporters as a simultaneous effort. We appreciate this and there is an Arab consensus on the importance of the European role to complement the role of the U.S."

"The Crown Prince and the prime minister have both assured Europe that we are totally committed to a comprehensive peace. We will cooperate with all the parties so that we can bypass the impasse we face, in and we agreed that we are all optimistic."

## Possible limited Arab summit on peace crisis welcomed by Jordan

By Tareq Ayyoub  
Special to the Jordan Times  
with agency dispatches

AMMAN — Jordan on Monday welcomed reports of a plan by Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak to hold an Arab summit to unify Arab ranks and remove the deadlock in peace talks. Information Affairs Minister Samir Mutaweh said that no official invitation had been extended to the Kingdom so far.

Dr. Mutaweh said Jordan was ready to take part in any Arab effort to advance the peace talks and solve the difficulties facing the peace process.

"Jordan welcomes any Arab activity that would push the peace talks ahead, but until this moment no invitation was extended to Jordan regarding such a summit," Dr. Mutaweh told the Jordan Times.

"There might be contacts between some Arab countries to hold the summit but no information was immediately available and no contacts were made with the Kingdom," the minister said.

Dr. Mutaweh was commenting on recent media reports in Cairo and elsewhere about holding a five-nation summit, that would include Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon and the Palestinian National Authority (PNA), to discuss ways of resolving the current peace crisis.

President Mubarak said his country is ready to host the summit which would be focused on resolving the peace crisis but ruled out holding a comprehensive Arab summit with all Arab leaders invited, "because it would complicate the crisis rather than solve it."

Mr. Mubarak, who concluded a regional tour earlier this week taking him to Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and Syria, suggested a second summit to follow the first which would include His Majesty King Hussein, Palestinian President Yasser Arafat, and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, with the participation of the United States.

The Egyptian leader said the proposed Arab summit should focus on "peace and not in order to take (against Israel)."

Syrian President Hafez Al Assad is expected in Cairo in the next few days for discussions with President Mubarak on the peace process, the Egyptian news agency MENA said.

A Palestinian official told AFP it was unlikely a four-way summit would take place during President Assad's visit.

"The situation is still not clear and we have to wait for the results of Assad's visit to see" when it would be held, Palestinian delegate to the Arab League, Mohammad Sobeh, said.

International cooperation minister in

the PNA, Nahil Shaath, told journalists in Gaza on Monday that a summit to be organized by Egypt should be "based on the principles of continuing the peace process and pushing Israel to stop settlement activity."

"We are prepared to participate in any meeting or summit which stops settlement or stops Israeli attempts to swallow up parts of Jerusalem. We are for it," Mr. Shaath added.

Arab League officials were quoted saying a comprehensive summit may be in the planning and would be attended by the league's 22 members to discuss the peace crisis and Israeli actions, especially the decision to build Jewish settlements on Arab lands.

The Israeli-PNA talks went into crisis following the Israeli right-wing government's decision to build a Jewish settlement in Arab East Jerusalem which led to the eruption of violent confrontations in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

A recent shun by the U.S. Middle East peace mediator Dennis Ross failed to bring the Israelis and the Palestinians back to the negotiations table. The American envoy was expected back in the region this week but State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns ruled out the trip this week and hinted Secretary of State Madeleine Albright may take the trip instead "when the time is right."

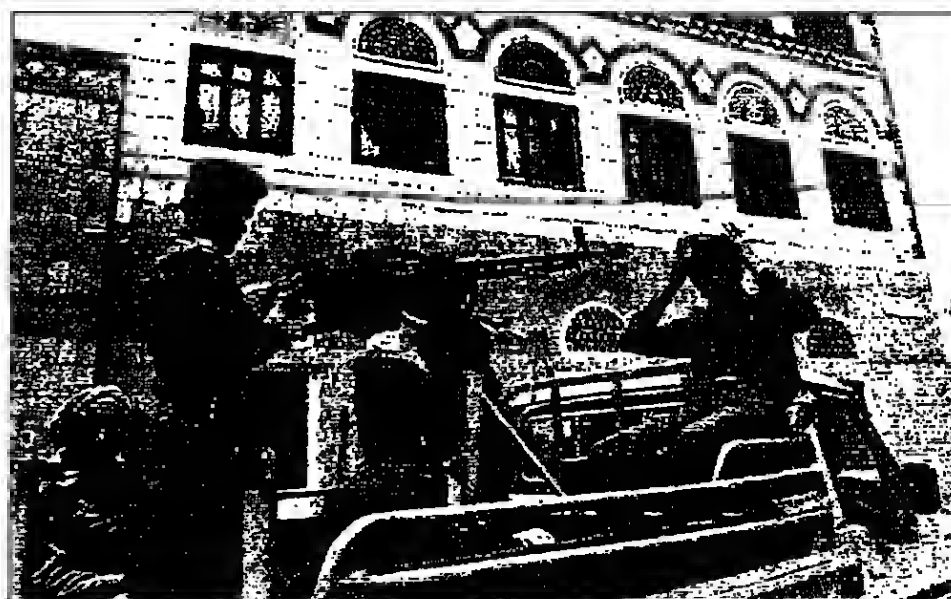
## Ruling party wins majority of seats counted in Yemen

SANAA (AP) — The party of Yemen's president won a majority of districts counted Monday in parliamentary elections in the Arabian peninsula's most democratic country.

With 49 of 301 constituencies decided, the General People's Congress (GPC) of President Ali Abdullah Saleh had won 33 seats. Its main foe, the Islamic Shiah Party (ISP), took nine seats and independents won seven, said a monitoring group working with the Supreme Elections Committee, which administered the vote.

The remaining results were expected Tuesday in an election considered largely fair by local and international monitors.

The vote, seen as a test of Yemen's fledgling democracy, was the first since the 1994 civil war which almost tore apart the union four years earlier of the conservative north and socialist south.



Yemeni soldiers patrol the Hashid tribe area, some 120 kilometres south of Sanaa, on Monday (AFP photo)

The high turnout suggested that a boycott urged by the Yemen Socialist Party (YSP), whose stronghold is in the south, had a limited effect. About 80 per cent of registered voters took part, said Sa'eed Al Hakim, a spokesman for the elections committee, although independent monitors put the number somewhat lower.

More than 2,300 candidates competed in the elec-

tion, about two-thirds of them independents. But Mr. Saleh's GPC and ISP were expected to win the most seats.

(Continued on page 7)

## Iraq says foreign oil deals almost ready

NICOSIA (AFP) — Iraq says it is close to agreement on upstream oil deals and their implementation with several foreign companies, thanks in part to a more favourable international atmosphere, an economic review published here reported Monday.

Iraqi Oil Minister Amer Rashid said his country has reached an understanding with interested oil companies on the plan for implementing the contracts, given the international sanctions against Iraq, the Middle East Economic Survey (MEES) reported.

The United Nations imposed sanctions on Iraq after it invaded Kuwait in 1990. The sanctions are to be lifted after verification that Iraq has destroyed its weapons of mass destruction.

The international political atmosphere is more positive towards Iraq and continues to change gradually in Baghdad's favour, Mr. Rashid told MEES by telephone from Rome.

The minister was in the Italian capital for talks with the Italian energy group ENI and its subsidiary AGIP and said they are close to signing a 23-year agreement on the development of the Naseriyah oil field in southern Iraq.

## Turkey places troops along Iraq's border

DIYARBAKIR, Turkey (AFP) — Turkey's army was massing a heavily-armoured force along the Iraqi border in apparent preparation for an incursion against Kurdish dissidents over the frontier, sources in this southeastern town said Sunday.

The Turkish general staff had confirmed a deployment to the region Saturday but denied that it was planning another incursion into Iraq.

A large number of armoured vehicles were seen near the border crossing of Hahur, and "thousands of soldiers" had been arriving over the past month, the sources said.

"The position of the Turkish troops all along the Iraqi border gives a strong impression that the start of a large-scale operation is very likely within the next few days against the Kurdish Labour Party (PKK) bases in northern Iraq," one of the sources told AFP.

The pro-Kurdish Istanbul daily Demokrasi claimed Saturday that some Turkish tanks had already entered northern Iraq for action against those PKK bases and camps.

But the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP), the main Iraqi Kurdish group controlling Iraq's border with Turkey, denied Demokrasi's report, saying there were no Turkish tanks on Iraqi soil.

Ankara accuses the PKK of organising hit-and-run attacks on Turkish military and civilian targets from bases in Iraq. In recent years, the Turkish army has conducted several incursions of varying size into northern Iraq.

Its largest in recent years occurred in March 1995, when 35,000 Turkish troops, supported by tanks and aircraft, fought PKK rebels in northern Iraq for six weeks. Several Western countries had denounced the incursion as a move violating Iraq's sovereignty.

In December last year, another cross-border strike killed 72 Kurdish fighters.

Turkey's military commanders said in their statement Saturday that "the troop movements in the area are aimed at taking more effective measures inside Turkey against possible attacks by the PKK terror organisation from the other side of the border."

"Reports suggesting that there would be a large-scale military operation inside Iraq are completely unfounded," commanders said.

The PKK, which is known to have bases in Iraq, has been fighting since 1984 to create a separate state for the Kurdish people scattered mainly in eastern Turkey, Iraq and Iran.

In all, more than 23,000 people, including Kurdish rebels, members of the security forces and civilians, have been killed since the start of the PKK's armed campaign.

## Children survive Israeli attack on full student bus

BEIRUT (AFP) — Lebanon has filed a complaint to the five-nation committee monitoring a ceasefire agreement in South Lebanon after a school bus packed with children was hit by Israeli fire, officials said Monday.

The protest was made late Sunday to the committee which comprises representatives from the United States, France, Israel, Syria and Lebanon.

French General Jean-Michel Gausson, currently presiding the committee, informed Beirut that its complaint will be heard when the panel meets Tuesday to discuss an Israeli protest about Hizbollah attacks, officials said.

"This is a scandalous violation of the April 26 ceasefire agreement because Israeli fire targeted civilians and the 30 students in the bus escaped unharmed by miracle" in Sunday's attack, a government official told AFP.

Under the truce accord which ended Israel's "Grapes of Wrath" offensive in Lebanon last year, Israel and Lebanon-based guerrillas were barred from targeting civilians or launching attacks from civilian areas.

The bus was hit with six 12.7 mm bullets fired from a position manned by Israeli troops and their allied South Lebanon Army (SLA) on the Kawakaba hilltop in an Israeli-occupied border zone in southern Lebanon, security sources said.

Nobody was harmed, but the machinegun fire caused trauma among the children, aged between four and 12 years, who were on their way to their school, an institution belonging to the Hizbollah.

Israel's complaint to the ceasefire committee concerns what it said was a Hizbollah attack on an army base inside northern Israel on Friday which injured two soldiers.

Hizbollah spearheads attacks against Israeli forces in South Lebanon in an attempt to force Israel's withdrawal.

## Opposition voices objection to current law yet participating in next elections

By Francesca Ciriaci  
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Resigned to an electoral law they disapprove of, opposition parties said on Monday they will try to make the most of the next general elections, even if that entails having to play by the rules they have long opposed.

His Majesty King Hussein's announcement on Saturday that there will only be "minor changes" to the current electoral law ended months of opposition campaigning for either the abolition of the one-person, one-vote system or the division of the Kingdom into a number of constituencies equal to the number of deputies to be elected.

On Monday, a source at the Ministry of Interior, who asked not to be named, confirmed that the only change to the electoral law will affect the Ma'an elec-

toral district, which currently elects five deputies.

"The Ma'an district will be split into two constituencies: One for Ma'an, to elect three deputies, and the other for Agaba, to elect two deputies," the source said, adding that "the number of seats in the Lower House will stay the same."

Islamic Action Front (IAF) Deputy Abdullah Akaleh declared: "We did our best to call for a different electoral law, but we could not achieve that. Nonetheless, we will enter the elections under the de facto situation."

"I am not happy," said Mohammad Ouran, Secretary General of the Homeland Party, recently merged in the leftist Jordanian Nationalist Democratic Front (JNDF) with Al Haq and the Jordanian Arab Baath Socialist Party.

"United we stand" seems to be the leftists' strategy to

save the day.

The JNDF will try to counteract what it deems as an "undesirable" electoral system "through the formation of a nationalist-leftist coalition which will include independent personalities," Dr. Ouran announced.

The Arab Baath Progressive Party (ABPP) expressed even more openly their dissatisfaction with the electoral status quo. "Whatever this government is trying to do, it is not doing it for the advancement of democracy, but for its own interests," said ABPP Secretary General Mahmoud Ma'aitah.

Criticising the current system on the allocation of seats, Mr. Ma'aitah said the electoral law results in over-representation of certain areas and groups and under-representation of others.

He mentioned Karak and other southern electoral dis-

tricts as "over-represented areas."

Speaking on behalf of his leftist coalition, Dr. Ouran said he has "always been against the one-person, one-vote formula."

"In a tribal society like ours, people will vote for their family's candidate, and will not make a political choice," Dr. Ouran told the Jordan Times.

IAF's Dr. Akaleh accused the current system of "causing social fragmentation," and stressed that "the IAF's stand [against it] was very clear from the very beginning."

But neither leftists nor Islamists considered the possibility of not participating in the upcoming elections, expected to take place in November.

"Either we play by the rules and make the most of it, or we do not run." And the latter, in Dr. Akaleh's words, "is not a possibility."



## EU ambassadors to return to Iran soon — diplomats

DUBAI (R) — European ambassadors will start returning to Tehran as early as this week, barely three weeks after being recalled when a German court cited Iran's rulers ordering political assassinations, European diplomats in Iran and Brussels said on Monday.

Though European Union (EU) foreign ministers due to meet on Tuesday are expected to keep their policy of "critical dialogue" with Iran under suspension, the return of ambassadors can be seen as a sign that the EU is reluctant to damage its lucrative ties with Iran. EU diplomats in Tehran said.

The United States again this month urged the 15-member bloc to take a hard line against Tehran and join economic sanctions Washington has imposed on Iran for alleged sponsorship of international terrorism. Iran denies the charges.

"We expect our ambassadors to return on May 1 or

at the end of this week," said a diplomat at one EU embassy in Tehran.

"The ambassador was asked to return for consultations. He is now ready to resume his duties," another European diplomat said.

Diplomats in Europe said on Monday that EU countries were expected to send their ambassadors back to Iran this week.

"Some (countries) felt that the ambassadors should have gone back earlier, but that was seen as giving the wrong signal," one diplomat in Brussels said.

EU capitals would be coordinating the return of their ambassadorial staff and the first heads of missions could return before the end of this week, a third diplomat in Tehran said.

EU governments except Greece recalled their envoys for consultations after a Berlin court on April 10 accused Tehran of ordering the 1992 murder of four

Kurdish dissidents in Berlin.

Tehran has denied any involvement in the murders and expelled four German diplomats from Tehran after Bonn kicked out four Iranian diplomats.

European foreign ministers in Luxembourg are expected to discuss a draft proposal that would accuse Iran of conducting state terrorism, break off high-level meetings with Iran and exclude top Iranian officials from EU states.

Iran's Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati has said he was not worried about ties with Europe.

"We do not have any expectations from them (EU). They are entitled to make a decision on their own and we will announce our stand toward their decision later on," Mr. Velayati said on Sunday in comments carried by Iran's official news agency IRNA.

Tehran Radio said on Monday: "It appears that

the EU has lost its past enthusiasm in dealing negatively with Iran and is instead seeking to maintain its ties with Iran."

In the weeks following the Berlin verdict, European leaders — particularly in Germany and France — have been at pains to stress the need to maintain links with Iran, the most populous Gulf state and the world's third largest oil exporter.

"The attitude in Iran, even since April 10, has been fairly relaxed... There has been no hostility," said a diplomat.

The EU is Tehran's biggest trading partner and it relies on Iran for 10 per cent of its oil import needs.

An early return of ambassadors would also help missions monitor Iranian presidential elections on May 23 which will see President Akbar Hasbemi Rafsanjani step down after eight years in office, the diplomats said.



EXHIBITION OPENED: Her Royal Highness Princess Sarvath Al Hassan, the honorary president of the Pakistan Women's Association (PWA) in Amman on Monday opens a two-day arts exhibition at the Marriott Hotel to raise funds for the Young Muslim Women's Association (YMWA). The exhibition displays distinctive art including jewellery, textiles, handicrafts and evening wear. The PWA has been organising an annual exhibition with a different emphasis each year. The annual April exhibition of high quality materials is the result of over a year's work, aiming to raise funds to help poor and disabled children in Jordan. The YMWA is a non-profit voluntary organisation, founded in 1972 and aims to help the disabled and needy.

## Italian surgeon introduces pioneering fat-removing technique to Jordan

By Tanya Habjouqa  
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Cutting edge plastic surgery capable of removing 20 kilograms of fat has been successfully introduced to the Kingdom in aesthetic surgeries conducted last Saturday and Monday, according to the surgeons who performed the operations.

Italian plastic surgeon Michael Zocchi brought his innovative technique to Jordan to teach local plastic surgeon Ghailth Shubailat, chairman of the board of the Amman Surgical Hospital.

"This will take off like hot cakes," Dr. Shubailat said, referring to the Ultrasonic Assisted Lipoplasty (UAL) method developed by Dr. Zocchi.

The UAL technique uses an ultrasonic device which "blasts" specific fat cells, removing the oil content of the cells but preserving the structure," Dr. Zocchi said in an interview with the Jordan Times.

"UAL is far less traumatic than traditional liposuction, it can be performed on elderly and obese patients," he said.

The elderly and obese are generally restricted from undergoing liposuction, as it poses a danger because of blood and tissue loss during the procedure.

The decision to bring Dr. Zocchi's technology to Jordan was finalised at the Mediterranean Meeting on Plastic

Surgeons in Nice earlier this month.

According to Dr. Zocchi, Saturday's surgery involved a 27-year-old Jordanian woman.

Both Dr. Zocchi and Dr. Shubailat removed four litres of fat from the patient's thighs and buttocks.

The patient spent one night in hospital and was released in excellent condition, Dr. Shubailat said.

"We have a very bappy, satisfied, and beautiful young lady," Dr. Shubailat said.

Dr. Zocchi maintained that the surgery was "well performed and all risks were under control."

According to Dr. Shubailat, risks can include chest infection, a collection of fluid under the skin, and other complications posed during most surgeries.



Italian plastic surgeon Michael Zocchi lipoplasty on one of his patients (file photo)

When asked if Dr. Shubailat would be capable of carrying out such surgeries on his own, Dr. Zocchi said that he had "full confidence in Dr. Shubailat's abilities."

Both doctors stressed a huge potential in the Middle East for implementing the method, and discussed plans to develop a comprehensive centre in Amman for

treating obesity.

There is a racial trend towards obesity in the Middle East, and only a small community, particularly the younger generation, are taking heed by dieting and working out, Dr. Shubailat said.

"Obesity is a disease, and this surgery should not just be considered aesthetic, but a surgery for life," Dr. Zocchi affirmed, adding that less

excess fat makes for a healthier person.

The doctors completed a riskier surgery yesterday, removing 14 litres of fat from a 47-year-old Jordanian woman, Dr. Shubailat said.

"Together we completed the operation in seven and a half hours. She (the patient) is in stable condition," he said.

The patient, approximately 13 kilos

lighter, is expected to spend three nights in hospital before going home, Dr. Shubailat added.

Dr. Zocchi stated that he had performed UAL surgery on 3,000 patients, with more than 100 cases each involving over 15 litres of fat removal.

He first envisioned the UAL technique in the mid-80's, disappointed by the limitations and risks involved with liposuction.

He noted the success of ultrasonic sound in treating brain tumours and eye crystals, and began developing his technique.

Dr. Zocchi published his first paper on the subject in 1988, and there are now more than 1,200 physicians using the UAL technique globally, he said.

According to Dr. Zocchi, the Food and Drug Administration of the United States approved the UAL technique one and a half years ago after extensive testing and scrutiny.

"I now lecture 150 doctors every month in the U.S., and estimate that over 2,000 surgeons will be taught this method by the end of 1997," he said.

Dr. Shubailat will be the first doctor in the Middle East conducting the UAL technique, he concluded.

## Khamenei bans press from supporting presidential candidates

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iran's paramount leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei on Sunday banned the country's leading newspapers from supporting individual candidates contesting presidential elections next month.

"Newspapers depending financially on the state have no right to act like the spokesman or press mouthpiece of a single faction or political movement," a statement from Ayatollah Khamenei's office said.

Calling on newspapers to "observe equity," the ayatollah warned publishers of the "legal consequences" of their positions.

The Iranian leader's warning was aimed principally at the daily Hamshahri, published by Tehran municipality. Iran Newspaper, published by the official news agency IRNA, and the nationalised Keyhan and Etefak.

Hamshahri, Iran and Etefak newspapers openly support the presidential bid by former Culture Minister Mohammad Khatami, a moderate candidate who is also backed by Islamic left-wingers. Keyhan, close to hardliners, has taken a more neutral line but is leaning towards former Information Minister Mohammad Reza Shariati, backed by a more radical faction within the government.

## Netanyahu effigy burned at the stake in Egypt's 'festival against injustice'

PORT SAID (AFP) — Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was symbolically burned at the stake Monday at an annual festival in Port Said where inhabitants burn effigies of hate figures.

Huge crowds turned out to see models of Mr. Netanyahu preparing to slit the throat of a dove of peace while his ministers gathered around, their eyes blindfolded to represent blindness, on a podium in the old quarter of this town at the northern entrance of the Suez Canal.

At the first light of dawn the effigies, stuffed with

straw, foam and rags, were buried onto a bonfire to cheers and applause. "For 25 years we have tried to express what people feel, and this time we felt they were frustrated with Netanyahu who is destroying the peace process," said Mussad Mustafa Khoder, one of the five brothers who create the models.

"We have nothing against the Israeli people, they want peace," Mr. Khoder added.

Mr. Netanyahu's effigy is the latest in a long line of figures to have been dispatched during the "festival of injustice" since it began during the British occupation in 1919.

They include Iraqi Presi-

dent Saddam Hussein, Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi, and former Israeli premiers Golda Meir and Menachem Begin.

Local hate figures also get the Port Said treatment such as butchers and doctors who charge extortionate amounts or — a favourite — referees judged to have brought about the defeat of

the local football team.

The following day, inhabitants dressed rag dolls in British army uniform and burned them.

All the models thrown onto the bonfire are called "Allenbys," after the former British High Commissioner Lord Edmund Henry Allenby who ruled Egypt from 1919 to 1925.

The festival came about after the British army killed seven people and wounded 17 others when it put down a nationalist demonstration in Port Said on March 21, 1919.

Since then, the holiday, which takes place the day before the national spring festival of Sham Al Nassim, has been dedicated to

destroying symbols of "arrogance, injustice, oppression and tyranny," according to festival literature.

As well as the main effigy burning, inhabitants create their own personal models to vent any spleen built up over the year.

Tradesman Yasser Sayed this year hung up a puppet outside his sports shop with a notice declaring it was the president of Egypt's Football Federation. He was going to burn it because he cannot forgive the national side's poor results in World Cup qualifying matches.

### JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel. 773111-19

#### PROGRAMME TWO

14:05 Cartoon — Budgie-The Little Helicopter  
14:30 .....Grimmy  
15:00 .....French Programmes  
16:00 .....Super Sports Follies  
16:30 .....Dog House  
17:00 Preserving for the Taste of it  
17:15 .....The Album Show  
18:00 .....French Programmes  
19:30 .....News Headlines  
19:35 .....Comedy — Ellen  
20:00 .....Tilt  
20:30 .....Encounter  
21:10 Doc — Assignment Earth  
22:00 .....News in English  
22:25 .....Snowy River  
23:00 .....Mission Impossible

#### PRAYER TIMES

04:23 .....Fajr  
05:48 .....(Sunrise) Duha  
12:33 .....Dhuhr  
16:12 .....Asr  
19:18 .....Maghreb  
20:43 .....Isha

#### CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church  
Sweifeh. Tel. 810740  
Assemblies of God Church  
Tel. 632785.  
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590

#### Church of the Annunciation

Tel. 637440.

#### De la Salle Church Tel.

661757.

#### Terra Sancta Church Tel.

622366

#### Anglican Church Tel. 652826.

Armenian Catholic Church

Tel. 771331.

#### Armenian Orthodox Church

Tel. 775261.

#### St. Ephraim Church Tel.

771751.

#### Amman International Church

Tel. 652526

#### Evangelical Lutheran Church

Tel. 824328.

#### German-speaking Evangelical

Congregation Tel. 845457

#### The Latter-Day Saints Tel.

654932.

#### Church of Nazarene Tel.

675691.

#### The Evangelical Local Church

in Amman Tel. 811295

#### English-speaking

Latin Catholics Parish Tel. 614190.

#### WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology

Temperature are expected to rise today with mild weather conditions prevailing and winds northeasterly moderate. On Wednesday, temperatures will rise further and winds easterly moderate. In Aqaba, winds will be northerly moderate and seas calm.

Amman .....07/20

Aqaba .....14/29

Deserts .....05/24

Jordan Valley .....17/28

Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 17, Aqaba 24 Humidity readings: Amman 59 per cent. Aqaba 37 per cent.

#### USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

#### NIGHT DUTY

#### AMMAN:

Dr. Hanna Mansour .....750197

Dr. Sa'ad Tawfiq .....788285

Dr. Nidal Dahleh .....827195

Dr. Khalil Ramadan .....774397

Ferdows pharmacy .....778336

Al Asema pharmacy .....637055

Al Salam pharmacy .....636730

Yacoub pharmacy .....644945

Shmeisani pharmacy .....637660

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#### NIGHT DUTY

#### AMMAN:

Nairoukh pharmacy .....623672

Najib pharmacy .....847632

#### IRBID:

Dr. Ghazi Ta'ammeh 250080

Al Quds pharmacy .....(—)

#### ZARQA:

Dr. Yousef Harzallah 988075

Khalifeh pharmacy .....985417

#### EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre .....637111

Civil Defence Dept .....661111

Civil Defence Immediate Rescue .....630341

Civil Defence Emergency .....199

Rescue Police 192, 621111, 637777

Fire Brigade .....617101

Blood Bank .....775121

Highway Police .....843402

Traffic Police .....896390

Public Security Department .....630321

Hotel Complaints .....605800

Price Complaints .....661176

Water and Sewerage Complaints .....897467

Amman Municipality Complaints .....787111

Telephone Information (directory assistance) .....121

Overseas Calls .....010230

#### Central Amman Telephone

Repairs .....623101

#### Abdali Telephone Repairs

661101

#### Jordan Television .....773111

Radio Jordan .....774111

Water Authority .....680100

#### Jordan Electricity Authority

815615

#### Electric Power Company

636381

#### RJ Flight Information

0853200

Queen Alia Intl. Airport 08-53200

#### HOSPITALS

#### AMMAN:

Hussein Medical Centre

813813/32

Khalidi Maternity .....64281/6

Akileh Maternity .....64341/2

Jabal Amman Maternity .....642362

Malhas, J. Amman .....636140

Palestine, Shmeisani .....607071

Shmeisani Hospital .....669131

University Hospital .....845845

Al-Muasher Hospital 667227/9

The Islamic, Abdali 666126/37

Al-Ahli, Abdali .....664164/6

Italian, Al-Muhajreen 77701/3

Al-Bashir .....775111/26

#### Army, Marks .....891611/15

Queen Alia Hospital

602240/50

Amal Hospital .....674155

The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery .....865199

#### ZARQA:

Zarqa Govt. Hospital (09)883323

Zarqa National Hospital

(09)900560

Ibn Sina Hospital .....(09)86732

Al Hikma Modern Hospital

(09)690990

#### IRBID:

Princess Basma Hospital

(02)275555

Greek Catholic Hospital

(02)272275



## Queen Noor attends Aga Khan Award for Architecture lecture

AMMAN (J.T.) — A regional dialogue on contemporary Arab architecture in the Middle East, held by the Aga Khan Award for Architecture, in collaboration with the Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation's Darat Al Funun, concluded with a lecture by renowned London-based Iraqi architect Zaha Hadid, winner of numerous international architectural competition, a Royal Court statement said.

The lecture was attended by Her Majesty Queen Noor, who has a degree in architecture and urban planning from Princeton University and has worked in various international architecture and urban planning projects.

The two-day dialogue joined Jordanian architects with their counterparts from other parts of the Arab World to discuss critical issues which face the Arab urban population, such as the role of government in urban planning, construction codes, revitalising traditional architectural heritage and conservation of historic architecture, the statement said.

ture, the statement said.

The Aga Khan Award for Architecture was established in 1977 to enhance the perception of Islamic culture as expressed through architecture. It recognises models of architectural excellence which not only "provide for people's physical, social and economic needs, but also respond to their cultural and spiritual expectations."

Jordan's Department of Urban Development won the Aga Khan Award in 1992 for its "East-Wihdat Development Project," while Jordanian architect Rassem Badran was granted the 1995 Aga Khan Award for Architecture for the Great Mosque Project and the redevelopment of the old city centre in Riyadh.

HRH Princess Ghida Talal also attended the lecture, according to the statement.

## Crown Prince emphasises broad regional cooperation

AMMAN (Petra) — HRH Crown Prince Hassan emphasised the promotion of cooperation through regional channels rather than confining cooperation among merely bilateral frameworks.

During a meeting with visiting professor and President of the Free State of Saxony in Germany Kurt Biedenkopf, Prince Hassan explored areas for increased cooperation between Jordan and the state in economic fields.

The Crown Prince underlined the importance of increasing cooperation between Jordan and the state of Saxony so that Jordan might benefit from economic relations with major states.

He also outlined prospects of Jordan benefiting from German and European Union (EU) expertise in developing

the valleys of the Danube and Rhine rivers in order to develop the Jordan Rift Valley.

Prince Hassan and Dr. Biedenkopf, who chairs the foreign affairs committee in the German parliament, also covered the Middle East peace process, refugee questions and interfaith dialogue.

The Crown Prince stressed Jordan's eagerness to promote economic development free of discrimination, through developing and managing human and natural resources in order to better utilise the Kingdom's resources.

The meeting was also attended by German Ambassador to Jordan Peter Mende.

Prince Hassan also received Ambassador Arthur Dunkel, chairman of the Swiss Trade Initia-

tive for the Middle East and North Africa (STMENA), and urged him to help develop economic and trade ties to raise the standard of living in the Middle East.

The Crown Prince emphasised the importance of strong trade ties and the creation of a data bank on trade.

Mr. Dunkel briefed the Crown Prince on the results of a second study, prepared by a group of STMENA experts and technicians, which tackled trade relations between Switzerland and the Middle East.

The initiative was also aimed at encouraging inter-regional trade links.

## Majali addresses JWA assembly

AMMAN (Petra) — Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali Monday urged writers and intellectuals to play an active role in eradicating negative social concepts.

In a meeting with the chairman and members of the Jordan Writers Association (JWA), Dr. Majali declared "through their work in the press and elsewhere, writers can help abolish negative concepts such as those which have dissuaded Jordanian youth from vocational and field jobs."

"Writers are capable of spearheading efforts to change these concepts and so contribute to dealing with unemployment and reducing poverty in Jordan," Dr. Majali stated.

The JWA chairman and members requested that the government re-examine regulations for granting state awards to distinguished writers and assign a plot of land upon which the association might build its premises.

Dr. Majali also visited the Ministry of Transport and Telecommunications where he attended a weekly meeting with Minister Bassam Saket to review administrative reform.

He described weekly meetings between ministers and senior staff as providing a positive atmosphere for constructive dialogue so as to benefit the reform process.

Dr. Saket outlined ministry plans for improving staff efficiency and plans for improving transport services at airports, border posts and seaports.

## King meets with Croatian dignitary

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty the King, in the presence of Crown Prince Hassan and Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali, Monday met with the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff of the Croatian Armed Forces Lieutenant General Pavao Miljavac to discuss Jordanian-Croatian relations.

Lt. Gen. Miljavac stated that he appreciated Jordan's role in conserving peace in Croatia.

In an earlier meeting, the premier affirmed that Jordan looks forward to strong political, economic and trade relations with Croatia for the benefit of both Jordanians and Croats.

In a meeting with Lt. Gen. Miljavac, Dr. Majali asserted that Jordan believes in not merely a regional peace

but a global one as well.

"We adhere to our principles and views that peace should be based on justice and not be confined to one region," the prime minister said.

In reviewing Jordanian-Croatian cooperation as well as the role of the Jordanian Armed Forces within U.N. peacekeeping forces in Croatia and other regions, Dr. Majali stated that "recruiting and preparing people for the battle of peace is no less important and no less difficult than preparing people for military conflict."

Through opting for peace all parties will gain a moral and material victory, he added.

However, "the dividends of peace can only be achieved through negotia-

tions after sowing confidence and tolerance among hating parties and this is what we have succeeded in achieving through the Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty."

The prime minister stated his hope that the Dayton peace accords, signed in the United States by the leaders of Bosnia, Croatia and Serbia, "would bear fruit and help establish genuine peace in that important part of Europe, so that people can embark on reconstruction and building cooperation with the rest of the world."

Lt. Gen. Miljavac paid tribute to the Jordanian contingent serving in U.N. peacekeeping forces in Croatia.

He described the peace treaty as helping to establish security in Croatia and

Bosnia and instrumental in creating a positive climate to normalise quotidian life.

"We are convinced that the continued conflict is catastrophic and so we have begun working towards a just and comprehensive peace despite internal and external obstacles," Lt. Gen. Miljavac affirmed.

Subsequent to his meeting with the premier, Lt. Gen. Miljavac was received by Field Marshal Abdul Hafiz Marei Kaabneh, chairman of the joint chiefs of staff of the Jordan Armed Forces, and the two reviewed the general situation in the Middle East, issues of mutual concern to Jordan and Croatia and the development of the Jordan Armed Forces.

## Families, evicted from their homes, pledge to petition King

By Rana Hussein  
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — A group of families who were Sunday evicted from state land and whose homes were bulldozed Monday, stated they would petition His Majesty King Hussein to address their grievances.

The families were evicted from their homes in Salhiyet Abed, east of Amman, early Sunday morning and one man, Fathi Salem Hneiti, 50, apparently died in the process.

At least 35 houses, most of which had been built in 1995 and scattered on a mountain and its surrounding areas, were demolished by Greater Amman Municipality (GAM) bulldozers.

Although the lands are government property and as such are registered by the Ministry of Agriculture to be used as forest land, residents claimed the right to live there.

"Our grandfathers have lived on this land for the past 35 years, and we have been paying government fees since 1978 for the privilege of using these lands," one resident said.

He said that Salhiyet Abed residents contacted both the ministries of Interior and Agriculture in the past in an attempt to register the land but received no response.

The resident, who requested anonymity, told the Jordan Times

that the government's move to demolish their lands was enacted without sufficient prior warning.

"District Governor Hashem Udwan informed us on Saturday that we had one week to settle the issue with the Ministry of Agriculture, and the following morning we were stunned by the sight of bulldozers demolishing our houses," the 43-year old man said.

Ministry of Agriculture officials confirmed that small clashes erupted between authorities and residents, who refused to leave their homes, resulting in some injuries.

"We were forced to take this action as many people were taking advantage of forest land, and this was the only way to deter them from exploiting government land," the ministry official said.

The residents claimed that they had been forced out of their houses, and that police cordoned off the area and detained all residents who refused to leave their homes.

The daughter of one man who reportedly died in the melee declared that as she was forced out of her home by police, her father, a GAM employee, upon returning to his house, began to yell "if you touch my family, I will kill you!"

"Then I heard several gunshots and saw my father lying on the ground," the 14-year old girl told the Jordan Times.

Mr. Hneiti's house was later demolished by the bulldozers, family members attested.

One of the victim's brothers told the Jordan Times Monday that the family would not receive the body for burial, until authorities determine the identity of the person responsible for his death.

In an interview with the Arabic Daily Al Ra'i, Minister of Interior Nathir Rashid affirmed that the government is planning to terminate any occupation of government land by individuals.

"We have seen repeated abuses...by many individuals and we are planning to legally end these abuses," the minister said.

The former residents of the demolished homes described them as temporary houses built for employees of quarries in the Salhiyet Abed area.

"We are poor and helpless and have no one but God," one man said, adding that the former residents of the area are planning to stage a demonstration in front of the Royal Court to address the issue.

"We want to deliver an open letter to the King in the correct procedural fashion and request that the authorities concerned compensate us for our losses," one woman concluded.

## Ensour details government plans for administrative reformation

By Tareq Ayyoub  
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Deputy Prime Minister for Services and Minister of Administrative Development Abdullah Ensour Monday affirmed that the government will continue with administrative reform and abolish administrative flabbiness in ministries and government institutions.

Speaking to reporters at a weekly briefing, Dr. Ensour described the process as not merely laying off thousands of government civil servants but also an "overall reformation to improve the performance of public sector employees."

"This is a very sensitive issue," the minister asserted. "We want to implement the process without hasty decisions as it touches the lives of every citizen."

"Therefore our approach should be well-researched and based on scientific study so as not to harm the public sector employees' source of income," he added.

"It will not be [concluded] at one time, but rather is a long process which must include every ministry and every public sector institution in order to maintain public administrative efficiency," Dr. Ensour explained.

Dr. Ensour's remarks came amid media reports that the government would terminate the contracts of thousands of civil servants in line with a plan for administrative reform.

On Saturday, His Majesty the King criticised media reports claiming the government was planning to dismiss public employees en masse.

"We are attempting to introduce reforms and we will work to achieve such, but in a way that will not cause harm to anyone," the King said, following a cabinet session.

"All sensational and disturbing reports and news which cause people to feel uncertain about their future, are out of place," he added.

Dr. Ensour estimated that approximately JD1.2 billion, almost two-thirds of the

1997 JD 1.7 billion budget, would be allocated for the salaries of 350,000 government employees in different ministries and public institutions.

One million employees make up the workplace in the Kingdom of which 660,000 persons are working in the private sector.

More than 350,000 persons work in 26 ministries, government departments, and 41 public sector institutions, the minister said.

A total of 200,000 of these employees are civil servants and 150,000 people currently labour in different military and security departments.

The administrative reform will not include army, public security and public intelligence department employees, Dr. Ensour confirmed, but will concern only civil servants.

He stated that the Ministry of Education and Higher Education has the greatest number of public sector employees with 66,000 persons, followed by the Ministry of Health and Medical Care with 22,000.

The number of retired employees who are still receiving government pensions is 120,000, he added.

Dr. Ensour refused to speculate as regards to the number of those projected to be dismissed or when these would happen.

"Nobody will be forced to leave," he affirmed.

He said that the reduction of public sector employees would not be discriminatory nor based on political or party allegiance or directed towards specific groups.

The reduction will not be restricted to lower-scale public employees but "high ranking government employees as well" the minister concluded.

## WHAT'S GOING ON

### FILMS

\* "A Handful of Dust" at the British Council, Jabal Amman at 6:00 p.m.  
\* Belgian Film "Toutou the Hero" at Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation, Jabal Amman at 7:00 p.m.

### EARTH DAY

The American Centre marks Earth Day by holding the following activities:

\* Seminar on "Sustainable Development." Panelists are Dr. Jawad Anani, deputy prime minister and minister of state for development affairs, Dr. Safet El-Deen Hamed, and Architect Ramzi Qawar. (9:00 a.m. — 12:00 noon).

\* Exhibits and displays — a drawing competition, entitled "Jordan: Sky, Earth and Water" for Jordanian children. (9:00 a.m. — 5:00 p.m.).

### EXHIBITION

\* "First Amman International Exhibition of Children's Books" at the International Exhibition Centre, University Road (Tel: 659891/2), until April 30.

\* "Exhibition of frescoes of Jordanian mosaics and Fayum portraits by Dorothy Mango at the Jordan Arts and Crafts Centre/Artisana, Jabal Amman, Second Circle (Tel: 647858), until May 10.

## To all those who helped Jordan River for Development Projects in it's fund raising campaign "Gifts for Needy Children in Eid Al-Adha" ...

We would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who kindly assisted Jordan River for Development Projects in their fund raising campaign for Jordanian children in need ..

Hundreds of presents were distributed all over the Kingdom .. in Karak, Ma'an, Zarka, Irbid, Jerash, Mafrak, Amman and Aqaba .. and through your help this Eid Al-Adha was a special one for many children..

Our appreciation goes to everyone who donated clothes, toys and food; to all the volunteers for their time and effort; to Al-Ra'i, Ad-Dustour, Jordan Times, Al-Aswaq and Al-Hadath newspapers; to Jordan Television and Radio Jordan for their coverage.

The campaign was a great success and we hope to reach even more children next year.

Rania Al-Abdullah

President  
Jordan River For Development Projects



Tel: 962 6 613081 / 962 6 613082 Fax: 962 6 613083  
Box 2943 Amman 11181 Jordan



## U.K. campaign pace quickens as attention turns to Tory opposition

LONDON (AFP) — With three days to the vote, the British election campaign pace quickened Monday amid mounting signals of a decisive Labour victory and speculation on the makeup of what would be the first opposition Tory Party in 18 years.

The final 72-hour burst of electioneering saw the main party candidates — Prime Minister John Major, Labour leader Tony Blair and Liberal Democrat chief Paddy Ashdown, taking to trains and helicopters in a frantic bid to reach pivotal far-flung constituencies.

Mr. Major was in Belfast for the first time in the campaign, with stops planned later in the day for Scotland and Wales.

In its haste to round up rapid transportation, Labour apparently failed to notice one of the 11 helicopters it leased belonged to Mobammad Al Fayed, the Egyptian billionaire owner of Harrods Department Store and

focus of the Tory cash-for-questions scandal.

A Labour spokesman seeking to avert criticism stressed the Fayed helicopter had been leased through a lease company and fully paid for like all the others.

There were mounting signals pointing to a decisive Labour victory Thursday, with some newspapers, notably the Times, using the word "landslide" in their front-page headlines.

The latest polls, published Sunday and Monday, confirmed Labour's widening 19-point lead over the Conservatives.

Speculation also intensified over the makeup of a post-election Conservative opposition, with Deputy Prime Minister Michael Heseltine and Defence Secretary Michael Portillo leading an eight- or nine-man field.

The Times said five other cabinet ministers — Foreign Secretary Malcolm Rifkind, Chancellor Ken-

neth Clarke, Welsh Secretary William Hague, Health Secretary Stephen Dorrell and Home Secretary Michael Howard — were expected to throw their hats into the ring if a leadership contest develops.

An outside candidate was said to be John Redwood, a former Welsh secretary who quit the cabinet two years ago in a failed bid to unseat Mr. Major as party leader.

In case of a reversal, the Tories would have to rapidly reorganise themselves along leadership lines among their MPs in the House of Commons.

Mr. Portillo dismissed the speculation as "drivel." Despite Labour's solid lead in the opinion polls, all parties were insisting there was still everything to play for.

Labour itself appeared most concerned about its lead, lest false confidence and complacency lull Labour voters into not voting. The Tories, still smarting

from a Labour attack last week accusing them — falsely, said Mr. Major — of wanting to abolish state pensions, said they would focus on Europe and the economy in the final hours of the campaign.

Labour, meanwhile was driving hard on what Mr. Blair called the "core issues" — over-crowded schools and the deteriorating National Health Service (NHS).

On the campaign trail in Nottingham, Mr. Blair was set to reaffirm his pledge to scrap the NHS internal market and end the "two tier" system of GP fundholders, recent Tory reforms widely blamed for the NHS being in critical condition.

The Labour message got a boost from a letter to The Daily Mirror, signed by 59 doctors, warning the Tories would "destroy" the NHS and urging voters to back Labour.

## China hails final demise of Cold War

BEIJING (AFP) — China hailed its landmark troop reduction treaty and political alliance with Russia Monday as the final demise of Cold War hostilities between Beijing and its ex-Communist neighbour, Moscow.

"President Jiang Zemin's visit fulfilled the historic task of ending the past and ushering in the future in Sino-Russian ties," the official China Daily said in an editorial.

"With Russian President Boris Yeltsin, he has hammered out the framework of the Sino-Russian partnership and their commitment to a post-cold war new order," it added.

The Sino-Soviet split, sparked by rivalry over control of the Communist World at the time when the battle lines between the United States and Russia

were being drawn, ended in 1989 after three decades of hostility and countless border skirmishes.

But it took a further eight years of confidence-building between the giant neighbours before Mr. Jiang agreed to spend five days in the Kremlin and make a public commitment to Sino-Russian ties.

On Wednesday, Mr. Jiang and Mr. Yeltsin issued a joint call for a new world order, implicitly rejecting the domination of the United States and the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) over the post-Cold War world.

A day later, they signed a border troop reduction treaty along with the ex-Soviet Central Asian states of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan, which capped the total size of forces along the once-tense

7,300-kilometre border at 260,800.

"At a time when NATO is seeking eastward expansion and the U.S.-Japan alliance is trying to stretch its scope, our agreements have convincingly told the world who are the responsible advocates of a just and rational new order," the newspaper said.

While both sides insist they have not made an alliance and are not ganging up on any third country, analysts in Beijing said the two nations were clearly making a joint stand against the "Russia and China are protesting too loudly against their forming an alliance. I don't think their criticisms of NATO, the U.S.-Japan defence agreement and U.S. interference over Taiwan can be seen in any other light," a Western diplomat said.

## China ratifies chemical weapons convention

BEIJING (AFP) — China ratified the international Chemical Weapons Convention on April 25, a Foreign Ministry spokesman said Monday.

"China's ambassador to the United Nations, Qin Huasun, submitted the letter of ratification to the United Nations on April 25," the spokesman said. "So China is now the 78th country to become an original signatory member of this convention," he added.

The convention, which was finalised in 1993 after 20 years of discussion, goes into effect Tuesday and bans the development, production, stockpiling or use of chemical weapons.

By ratifying before the deadline, China has become a founder member of the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), the body charged with enforcing the charter.

Only founder members will sit on the OPCW's Executive Committee, which will direct monitoring work and have access to confidential data on world chemical weapons stocks.

China's ratification also came one day after that of the United States and brings the number of the permanent members of the U.N. Security Council who have ratified the convention to four.

France and Britain ratified the document in 1995 and 1996, and only Russia — which has some of the world's largest stocks of chemical weapons — now remains outside the agreement.

In Moscow, deputies to the State Duma, the lower house of parliament, voted Friday to postpone ratification because of "very difficult economic conditions."

China had previously expressed fears about signing the treaty because of the inspection procedures.



Japanese Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto (right) and Australian Prime Minister John Howard wave after meeting school children at Parliament House in Canberra Monday. Mr. Hashimoto is on a two-day visit aimed at broadening ties with Australia and raising Japan's political profile in the Asia-Pacific region (Reuters photo)

## Hashimoto in Australia to discuss trade and Asia

SYDNEY (R) — Japanese Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto arrived in Australia Monday for a two-day visit aimed at broadening ties and raising Japan's political profile in the Asia-Pacific.

Mr. Hashimoto, fresh from a Washington summit with President Bill Clinton, will hold talks with Prime Minister John Howard, deliver a speech on the role of the two nations in Asia, and visit the Australian War Memorial in Canberra.

He is expected to express support for Canberra's bid to join the fledgling Asia Europe Meeting (ASEM) — opposed by Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohammad — and listen to long-standing Australian complaints about access to Japan's rice market.

In Australia, Mr. Hashimoto, a former trade minister who began his second term as prime minister in November, hopes to expand the focus of bilateral ties once centred mostly on economic issues, Japan is Australia's biggest trading partner.

"Previously, Japan's ties with Australia developed focusing on economic issues. Now we would like to strengthen political ties, including the relationship between our leaders," a Japanese diplomat said ahead of Mr. Hashimoto's visit.

Australian Defence Minister Ian McLachlan said in a television interview Sunday that Australia also would like to discuss expanded defence arrangements.

Officials said increased ties would mainly involve more talks between Australian and Japanese military officials and some discussion on purchasing arrangements.

Japan's constitution severely restricts the involvement of the Japanese military with other countries.

Mr. Hashimoto, making the first visit to Australia by a Japanese leader in four years, is likely to propose annual Australia-Japan summits, a move that might appear more form than substance given that leaders of the two nations already meet fairly regularly.

With no serious two-way feuds to distract them, Mr. Hashimoto and Mr. Howard are likely to discuss a bilateral, regional and global issues such as U.S.-Japan ties, China, North Korea, and economic cooperation in forums such as APEC, the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Forum.

Japanese officials said Mr. Hashimoto would reaffirm support for Australia's bid to join the ASEM, which links Brunei, Malaysia, Indonesia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam, Japan, China and South Korea with the 15-member European Union.

He will also listen to Canberra's complaints about market access.

"Certainly the prime minister and I and others will be raising the question of expanded and fairer rice market access," Australian Deputy Prime Minister Tim Fischer said Sunday.

Ever keen to present Japan as a real political player in the Asia-Pacific, Mr. Hashimoto will deliver a speech outlining his stance toward the region in Canberra Monday.

Mr. Hashimoto made a stab at pitching a new view of Japan's role in Asia last January, capping a tour of five South East Asian nations by proposing tighter political ties with a newly aggressive ASEAN (Association of South East Asian Nations).

"Hashimoto has always had his eye on Asia. It's not just Hashimoto, it's government policy to expand Japan's political role in the region," said John Neuffer, a political analyst at Mitsui Marine Research Institute in Tokyo.

"I don't think that the Japanese really know what they mean by saying that, but at least they give the impression they are not the same old political animal," he added.

Japan, however, remains deeply ambivalent over whether it should assume a higher-profile role in regional non-economic affairs, given constitutional limits on military action abroad and a traditional alliance on the U.S. security umbrella.

Many of Japan's Asian neighbours are equally wary. On Wednesday, Mr. Hashimoto flies to New Zealand for talks with Prime Minister Jim Bolger and other members of his coalition government installed last December.

## Khan: India, Pakistan should halt 'mad arms-race' over Kashmir

NEW DELHI (AFP) — India and Pakistan should halt their "mad arms-race" over Kashmir and divert military funds for welfare, the Pakistani foreign minister told the Times of India newspaper in an interview published Monday.

Gobar Ayub Khan also said that recent talks between the two sides were the beginning of efforts to resolve disputes between India and Pakistan, who have fought three wars since the subcontinent's independence in 1947.

"Countries that were so far behind have shot ahead. We have got into a mad arms race," Mr. Khan told the Times in Islamabad.

"We could very easily use

all this money for the betterment of our people."

The Pakistan foreign minister described his April 9 talks in New Delhi with Prime Minister Inder Kumar Gujral, who was then India's foreign minister, as "encouraging."

"We have broken the ice. We are talking and that is encouraging," Mr. Khan said.

"I told Gujral in this meeting: 'It's good that you recognise there is a refrigerator to defreeze.' And that refrigerator is Kashmir."

"There has to be a defreezing, as Gujral had said. We have to build confidence among ourselves, move to the recognition of the core issue of Kashmir."

Foreign secretaries of the two South Asian rivals met here for talks for the first time in three years in March.

Mr. Khan, however, rejected India's stand that its dispute with Pakistan was a bilateral issue and that other countries cannot be permitted to mediate.

"Kashmir is an internationally recognised dispute. We feel strongly that the two of us have got bogged down in a straitjacket, fought three wars — to what end?" Mr. Khan asked.

More than 20,000 people have died in Kashmir, India's only Muslim-majority state, since 1989 when Muslim separatists stepped up their anti-Indian rebellion.

## Burma says West pushing for Suu Kyi as leader

RANGOON (R) — Burma Monday said Western nations were likely to maintain pressure on the country following the imposition of U.S. sanctions until opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi won power.

"(The West) will continue to exert pressure on Myanmar (Burma) until the woman they prefer ascends the throne," a commentary in state-run newspapers said.

"They will continue to harass Myanmar with a heap of fabricated news until Myanmar people are impoverished and starved and kneel before her and ask 'save us, help us'."

The commentary did not mention Ms. Suu Kyi by name, but referred to the "daughter of the national leader." Ms. Suu Kyi is daughter of Burma's independence hero Aung San. "I have already reckoned this (sanctions) would happen one day. I have also estimated what further steps they will take," the commentary by columnist Sithu Nyein Aye said.

Washington banned new American investment in Burma last week. Earlier this year, the European Union (EU) decided to remove trade privileges for some exports.

The United States and the European Union both cited human rights abuses committed by Burma's military government for their decision and its repression of the democracy movement led by Ms. Suu Kyi.

Malaysia Monday called attempts by the United States to block Burma's entry into the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) "completely untenable."

Malaysian minister of international trade and industry, Rafidah Aziz said the U.S. sanctions "and the aggressive U.S. effort to prevent Myanmar from becoming an ASEAN member" must be resisted by the seven-member group.

The United States stepped up pressure Friday by openly opposing Burma's entry into ASEAN, expected this year. State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns said Washington planned to use its influence with ASEAN partners to lobby the group.

ASEAN, which comprises Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam, is expected to admit Burma, Cambodia and Laos as full members this year.

The Rangoon newspaper commentary said Washington wanted Ms. Suu Kyi to be leader because she would be "pro-West" and would give Western nations a foothold on the most strategic region of South East Asia.

Burma's media, considered a mouthpiece of the military government, and government officials often accuse Ms. Suu Kyi of being a "minion" or "lackey" of the West, in part because of her marriage to British academic Michael Aris.

"Myanmar took interest in the daughter of the national leader they respected and admired and flocked to her for curiosity," the commentary said. "She relished it and she later cannot see the truth."

Since being released from six years of house arrest in July, 1995, Nobel Peace Laureate Suu Kyi has made repeated, unanswered pleas to the government to talk about ways to restore democracy to Burma.

She has also urged foreign investors not to come to Burma until the situation improved and was a vocal proponent of the U.S. economic sanctions.

The commentary said Ms. Suu Kyi was trying to ruin the country.

## Canada goes to polls in June election

GRAND-MERE, Quebec (R) — Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chretien called a June 2 general election Sunday, 17 months before it was due, in order to cash in on a solid Liberal lead in the polls.

"I have just met with the governor-general, who has issued a writ dissolving parliament. A general election will be held on June 2," he said in Ottawa, the nation's capital. The governor-general is the representative of Canada's head of state, Queen Elizabeth.

"I will be asking Canadians to give the Liberal Party a new mandate to build on the record of the last four years," Mr. Chretien said.

In fact, he has only governed for 3-1/2 years, but has such a lead in the polls over a badly split opposition that another majority government would be assured if voting trends held until election day.

Mr. Chretien, 63, was unable to tell a reporter afterwards a single, clear issue necessitating an election. "I'm asking the people of Canada to vote because we're well advanced in the fourth year of the mandate," he responded.

After reflecting, he said the Liberals' rivals wanted to turn the clock back, and he needed a new mandate to

stop them. Later Sunday afternoon in a school auditorium in Saint-Maurice, Quebec, Mr. Chretien called on Quebec voters to give his party enough of the province's 75-seat share of representation in the House of Commons to show that the French-speaking province is an integral part of Canada.

"I want people to know here that Canada needs Quebec, and Quebec needs Canada," Mr. Chretien told a raucous crowd of Liberal Party supporters, who acclaimed him as their candidate in the district.

"Canada is the best country and I want Quebec to be there, all the time very present and (to) be leaders in the affairs of the nation," he said.

In the 1993 election, the separatist Bloc Quebecois won 54 of Quebec's 75 seats, leaving the Liberals with 20 and the Conservatives with one.

Surrounded by cabinet ministers and members of parliament from Quebec, Mr. Chretien said Canadians were supportive of his government's policies during its first term. Those included a determined deficit-cutting programme, controversial gun control legislation, and a refusal to allow the provinces to begin charging user fees for medical services that are free

under Canada's generous national Medicare system.

In his formal remarks on the election call, Mr. Chretien tried to show that relief was ahead after the tough deficit slashing his government had implemented.

"Today we see that the light at the end of the tunnel is growing brighter," he said.

But he refused to yield to the calls for tax cuts being issued by the Conservative and Reform parties on his right, saying it would risk all the gains Canada had made "to introduce a tax cut before the country can afford one."

An Angus Reid poll published Saturday gave the Liberals a 24-point lead amongst decided voters over their nearest rivals, the Conservatives, and a Gallup Canada poll Friday put them 40 points ahead.

A right-wing split between the populist Reform Party and the then-ruling Conservatives in 1993 enabled the Liberals to sweep to a crushing majority of 177 out of 295 seats in the House of Commons.

The opposition is further split with the Bloc Quebecois pushing for the separatist vote in Quebec and the New Democratic Party (NDP) angling for the left with calls for more spending and more taxes.

## Fighting in name of Islam mars anniversary of Afghan Islamic victory

KABUL (AFP) — Five years after the Kabul Communist government was defeated by the Muslim freedom fighters known as the Mujahedeen, fighting in the name of Islam continues in Afghanistan.

But the fighting now is between rival Islamic groups.

On April 28, 1992, the victorious Mujahedeen established their Islamic government in Kabul, marking the end to nearly 14 years of Jihad (holy war) against the Afghan Communists and invading Soviet forces.

Four years later, in September 1996, the government of President Burhanuddin Rabbani backed by the Mujahedeen forces of Commander Ahmad Shah Masood was ousted by the Taliban, a militant militia also fighting in the name of Islam.

The Taliban said they fought Commander Masood because he failed to deliver security and "pure" Islamic rule to the Afghan people who had fallen prey to "evil and corruption" through exposure to music, cinema and Western fashion.

The fifth anniversary Monday of the Mujahedeen's 1992 victory in Kabul cannot be a sweet one for Commander Masood, who is now holed up in his native Panjshir Valley 90 kilometres north of Kabul.

Commander Masood gained international fame fighting the Soviet Red Army during their 10-year occupation of Afghanistan — from 1980 to 1988 he survived nine major Communist offensives to earn the sobriquet "Lion of the Panjshir."

Born in 1956, guerrilla

expert Commander Masood is still relatively young by Afghan standards to aspire to national leadership. His political boss, the white-bearded Jamiat-i-Islami faction leader Rabbani is 57 years old and a noted religious scholar.

Both Commander Masood and Mr. Rabbani are Islamists who favour religious reform, but they reject the harsh fundamentalist impositions of the Taliban who insist that men grow untrimmed beards and women should not work in public. In order to defeat the

Taliban, Commander Masood has joined forces with a former rival, General Abdul Rashid Dostum whose ethnic Uzbek forces were once the main prop for the former Afghan Communist regime.

Gen. Dostum, who started out as a pipe-fitter in the northern Afghan oil fields, rose to prominence as boss of the feared Jawzjan militia when he won the title "Hero of the Republic" fighting the Mujahedeen.

The first president of Afghanistan from the Mujahedeen faction nominated Gen. Dostum as the "great

Islamic warrior" after he defected to the Mujahedeen in March 1992. The Uzbek warlord has been a main player in Afghan politics ever since.

Another former pro-Communist militiaman in alliance with Gen. Dostum and Commander Masood is General Sayyad Jaffar Naderi, hereditary leader of the Ismailia religious minority in central Afghanistan.

Gen. Jaffar's territory adjoins that of another anti-Taliban ally, Karim Khalili, leader of the ethnic Hazara faction called Hezb-i-Wah-

dat, which was once a fierce opponent of Commander Masood's.

This hotchpotch of disparate factions, all created in the name of Islam, have announced plans to take-on the Taliban militia in a nationwide coordinated offensive later in the spring.

That being the case, observers here say, the sixth anniversary of the "Islamic victory" is less likely to coincide with peace in Afghanistan than it is with continued fighting.





Peruvian President Alberto Fujimori (left) and Japanese Foreign Minister Yukihiko Ikeda walk inside one of the tunnels of the ruins of Chavin de Huantar in Chavin, 385 kilometres northeast of Lima. Mr. Fujimori said that the 3000 year-old pre-Inca tunnel construction inspired him to work out a rescue plan for the hostages held by rebels inside the Japanese ambassador's residence. Peruvian military commandos stormed the Japanese ambassador's residence on April 22 to rescue 72 hostages held since December 17, 1996 (Reuter photo)

## Crucifix plant launched bloody Peru hostage raid

LIMA (R) — More details of Peru's James Bond-style hostage rescue emerged Sunday as sources revealed that a captive retired navyman tipped off troops to the right moment for the bloody attack via a microphone planted in a crucifix.

Former Navy Rear Adm. Luis Giampietri gave the signal Tuesday for commandos to explode out of tunnels and storm into the Japanese ambassador's home to rescue 72 hostages, security force sources said.

Adm. Giampietri passed the early weeks of the 126 days he was holed-up in the "mined and booby-trapped" mansion establishing a link with Peru's intelligence service by speaking aloud to test possible bugs that had been smuggled into the house.

Talking into flowers, lamps and even the toilet-Basin proved in vain. But then one of the many people permitted to enter the mansion by the Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement (MRTA) rebels advised him to test a crucifix, a police source said.

Adm. Giampietri spoke into the crucifix and knew he had made contact with the outside when his instruction to the military to change the music it was playing was obeyed.

He requested that the mar-

dal music blasting each day from loudspeakers placed around the diplomatic compound be changed to a selection of Mexican folk songs. The music — used to cloak the noises of the tunnels' construction — changed.

Adm. Giampietri then passed on a second message to let the military know the number of a beeper that another hostage had switched on despite the rebels' searches.

The combination of the crucifix and the beeper set up a two-way communication that allowed the 72 hostages to receive a warning minutes before the bloody assault. The warning allowed them time to clear passages to exits and helped them react calmly amid the explosions and bullets.

The collaboration with Adm. Giampietri — informing him where the bug was hidden — led to the rescue of all but one of the 72 hostages. It was not known who tipped off Adm. Giampietri or who took the crucifix into the residence.

Peace talks guarantors, Catholic Archbishop Juan Luis Cipriani, Canadian Ambassador Anthony Vincent, Red Cross officials and visiting doctors frequently entered the mansion during the 18-week siege. The attack has provoked a rash of accusations that Pe-

ruvian commandos executed two captured rebels, but President Alberto Fujimori vehemently denied the charges.

But a former hostage, a commando who took part in the raid, military, police and rebel sources have suggested that troops shot to death two unarmed rebels they had caught and held in an upper-story room of the mansion.

All the MRTA rebels, two commandos and one hostage, a local judge, died in the battle, which lasted 16 minutes.

Troops who had waited for two days in tunnels before Adm. Giampietri's signal crashed through the floor of a reception room where at least half of the 14 rebels were playing soccer.

The remarkable lowering of the rebels' guard was born of an over-confidence that Mr. Fujimori would not order an attack. They believed peace talks were edging toward a conclusion, a source close to the negotiations said.

The lapse was especially surprising as MRTA leader Nestor Cerna claimed to know the tunnels existed when, weeks beforehand, he called off a scheduled round of talks saying the rebels had heard hanging under-

neath the house.

In response to that discov-

ery, the rebels kept their prize hostages in different rooms and planted more mines around the house, former hostage Police Col. Marco Miyashiro said in an unpublished interview obtained by Reuters.

Cerna, who took part in the ill-fated soccer game, bad grown lax in the final days of the 18-week siege, according to the close friend of a key hostage who was not spoken publicly but was in regular contact with Cerna during the saga.

The MRTA leader was holding out for the freeing of 20 of his jailed comrades — a reduction from his original demand of 450 releases. The government's final negotiating position had been to free 12 guerrillas, the source said.

Mr. Miyashiro said Cerna had expected the siege to last until at least May 1. The Marxist rebels had prepared a statement to issue from the residence celebrating the date traditionally marked by leftist groups, he said.

They also aimed to broadcast a message on April 28 to mark the anniversary of a battle that the hostage-takers often sang about. The MRTA, which lost more than 60 fighters in the 1989 "Los Molinos" battle with the military, has in the past marked Monday's anniversary with attacks.

"We think we almost have an agreement on basic issues such as the format, content and level of representation of both sides. Only the venue remains difficult," Mr. Ri said in his message.

"So as not to complicate the issue on humanitarian grounds, we don't need mid-term negotiations, and see no reason for you not to accept if your offer is without strings," Mr. Ri added.

The South had proposed the Panmunjom meeting to speed up transportation of food raised by an increasing number of private fund-raising drives here since Pyongyang admitted that more than 100 children had

died of hunger.

The quarrel over a venue came as the South's Red Cross, the only government-approved window for private aid to the economically-crumbling North, announced that it was ready "another shipment of food, the second in a week."

The 110 tonnes of wheat flour, donated by a Christian group, would leave the port of Incheon for the North's Nampo Port on or around April 30, it said in a statement.

The shipment follows a cargo of potatoes sent North over the weekend by the Red Cross.

The Seoul government sent 150,000 tonnes of rice free to the North's hungry in 1995, but since then has contributed only indirectly through United Nations appeals, saying an improvement in ties or a signal that North Korea is serious about proposed peace talks is needed before donating larger amounts of direct food aid.

Pyongyang in its turn accuses Seoul of tying aid to politics.

Meanwhile, Hunger in North Korea is forcing peasants to sell clothes for food, to sneak into China to steal animal feed and even to delay burials to prevent cannibalism, visitors to the border said Monday.

However, many North

## Aid agencies to visit refugees in Zaire after Kabila order

KISANGANI, Zaire (R) — International aid agencies hoped to gain access Monday to some of up to 100,000 Rwandan refugees scattered in the Zaire jungle after rebel chief Laurent Kabila ordered their repatriation within 60 days.

Aldo Ajello, the European Union's (EU) special envoy to Africa's Great Lakes region, would lead the team with Filippo Grandi, the regional coordinator for the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

Mr. Ajello said the mission was part of a deal struck during a three-hour meeting between Mr. Kabila and aid representatives at which the guerrilla chief asked the United Nations to repatriate all the Rwandan Hutu refugees remaining in Zaire from May 1.

On the diplomatic front, Mr. Kabila told Reuters Monday that he would meet U.S. Ambassador to the U.N. Bill Richardson in Lubumbashi. Mr. Richardson was due to meet Zaire's ailing President Mobutu Sese Seko Monday, according to Mr. Kabila.

"Richardson is coming as U.S. President (Bill) Clinton's special envoy to try and speed the peace efforts," Mr. Kabila said.

"At the end of his talks in Kinshasa and with me, there will be a major announcement on progress," Mr. Kabila added.

Mr. Richardson arrived in Zaire Monday and declared that the United States wanted to see a negotiated settlement in the central African nation's seven-month-old civil war.

"The United States believes that there can be no military solution to the crisis, but rather a negotiated settlement leading to an inclusive transitional government and fair and free elections," Mr. Richardson said in a prepared arrival statement.

"I am also here because of our grave concern for the plight of several thousand refugees and displaced Zaireans. There is a humanitarian crisis here and the international community must respond," Mr. Richardson added.

He said he would meet President Mobutu Sese Seko Tuesday morning and then travel to Lubumbashi, in rebel-held territory, Wednesday to see guerrilla leader Mr. Kabila.

Mr. Richardson was bringing a personal message from President Bill Clinton to Mr. Mobutu, which he would deliver to the Zairean leader at his Camp Tshatshi residence, Mr. Mobutu's son and adviser Nzanga Mobutu told Reuters earlier.

Mr. Richardson declined to answer reporters' questions on efforts to bring Mr. Mobutu and Mr. Kabila together for talks aimed at preventing war reaching the capital Kinshasa.

Mr. Kabila said South African President Nelson Mandela

and U.N. envoy Mohammad Sahnoun were working on the details of the venue for his meeting with Mr. Mobutu but it would definitely not be Gabon, which is favoured by Mr. Mobutu's government.

"Wherever it is, President Mandela will chair," he said.

Mr. Kabila said he had given the United Nations 60 days to repatriate the refugees and would stick to the ultimatum. He said he hoped the world body would put its machinery into action.

Aid agencies lost track of the Rwandan Hutus after they disappeared last week from makeshift camps about 35 kilometres south of Kisangani.

Mr. Kabila denied that his forces sparked the exodus by attacking the camps and said he was seeking a personal apology from U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan who described the fate of the refugees as "slow extermination."

"The United Nations has made promises it has not kept and Kofi Annan must come here himself to apologise," he said, adding that U.N. officials in Kisangani assured him that nothing in their reports to their headquarters should have prompted Mr. Annan's robust criticisms.

Mr. Kabila also said he would allow an independent investigation into alleged killings of Rwandan Hutus but he emphasised that the inquiry team must be amicably agreed upon by both parties.

About 30 refugees who reached Kisangani Saturday said their camp was surrounded Tuesday by soldiers and then attacked by villagers armed with axes and machetes.

Some of them were among 33 refugees who were airlifted from Kisangani to the Rwandan capital of Kigali Sunday, the first such evacuation since U.N. officials approved an unprecedented air evacuation earlier this month.

Mr. Kabila said his forces knew where the bulk of the refugees were and he would help U.N. officials to locate them.

Some of the refugees played a prominent role in the 1994 slaughter of an estimated 800,000 minority Tutsis and moderate Hutus in Rwanda and Mr. Kabila said last week that criminals among them had transported their lawlessness to Zaire.

More than a million Hutus fled Rwanda to escape reprisals for the genocide. Most returned in a repatriation sparked by Mr. Kabila's sweeping rebel advance through eastern Zaire.

But up to 100,000 marched nearly 500 kilometres west through dense jungle before being overwhelmed by hunger, exhaustion and illness just south of Kisangani.

Rebel authorities have blamed local hostility to the refugees on envy sparked by the sight of tonnes of food and other aid being given to them by aid organisations.

## N. Korean wants Red Cross meeting in Beijing

SEOUL (Agencies) — North Korea Monday insisted that a proposed North-South Red Cross contact on food aid be held in Beijing instead of the truce village of Panmunjom, as wanted by the South, officials said.

The North rejected our proposal for contact in Panmunjom, insisting on its earlier proposal for a contact in Beijing on May 3," a South Korean Red Cross spokesman told AFP.

"We haven't yet decided on our position," the spokesman said after North Korean Red Cross Chief Ri Sung-Ho called in a telephone message for Seoul to accept Beijing as the venue.

"We think we almost have an agreement on basic issues such as the format, content and level of representation of both sides. Only the venue remains difficult," Mr. Ri said in his message.

"So as not to complicate the issue on humanitarian grounds, we don't need mid-term negotiations, and see no reason for you not to accept if your offer is without strings," Mr. Ri added.

The South had proposed the Panmunjom meeting to speed up transportation of food raised by an increasing number of private fund-raising drives here since Pyongyang admitted that more than 100 children had

died of hunger.

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Pyongyang in its turn accuses Seoul of tying aid to politics.

Meanwhile, Hunger in North Korea is forcing peasants to sell clothes for food, to sneak into China to steal animal feed and even to delay burials to prevent cannibalism, visitors to the border said Monday.

However, many North

Koreans are so terrified of official retribution they dare not cross into China over the border that is marked in part of northern Jilin province by a shallow river that can be waded easily.

The situation in North Korea is very bad," one recent visitor to the Jilin border town of Yanji quoted an ethnic Korean salesgirl as saying.

"There is only corn to eat and very little of that," said the woman, who recently visited her sister who lives across the border in the Stalinist hermit state.

"People have to sell their clothes to get the money to buy food."

The North of the country has been hardest hit by floods that wiped out crops for two consecutive years.

Pyongyang has appealed for food aid but has not allowed aid officials to the region and last week prevented workers of World Vision International, a Christian charity that has worked in North Korea since 1995, from touring the region.

Chinese in Yanji who have frequent contacts with the North said the situation appeared to be deteriorating.

One recent sign was the decision by some North Korean peasants to delay the burial of their dead for fear the bodies would be dug up and eaten by other

hungry farmers, a recent visitor quoted Yanji residents as saying.

Farmers now kept their dead in their homes until the corpse began to putrefy before burying it to prevent cannibalism, several Chinese residents said.

For those desperate enough to sneak across the border and through North Korea's security net, punishment can be brutal and swift, Chinese and ethnic Koreans told recent visitors.

Few make the journey because of the security and restrictions on obtaining visas, Yanji residents said.

Those who do are quickly spotted by a network of North Korean spies based in China who round up the escapees as illegal immigrants and force them back across the border, they said.

Punishment is swift.

"The North Korean police put a metal wire through the nose of some people who escape," the visitor quoted one Yanji resident as saying. "It's like a brand that marks them out."

Even children are not exempt.

"We can hear the screams of children when they put the metal wire through their nose because they do it as soon as they cross into North Korea and the border is very close," the Yanji resident was quoted as saying.

## French poll puts centre-right narrowly ahead

PARIS (R) — An opinion poll Monday showed France's centre-right coalition heading for a narrow majority in next month's parliamentary elections but found more than one-third of voters could change their minds.

The BVA poll for France 2 Television, Paris-Match magazine and Europe 1 Radio said that if the May 25-June 1 election were held now, the ruling RPR-UDF coalition would win 296 of the 555 seats in metropolitan France, the Socialists 238, the Communists 18, the Ecologists two and

the extreme-right National Front one.

The poll, taken Friday, Saturday and Sunday with a sample of 1,030 registered voters, gave the following voting intentions on the first round: UDF-RPR 39 per cent, Socialists and others on the left 28 per cent, National Front 14 per cent, Communists 10 per cent, Ecologists seven per cent and extreme left two per cent.

Seventeen per cent of those who said they were certain to vote did not express a voting intention. Of those who did, 38 per cent

said they could still change their minds.

BVA said its first projection since President Jacques Chirac dissolved parliament last Monday showed that the race was still wide open.

A single percentage point variation in voting intentions for the major parties or the National Front could radically change the outcome, it said.

Two opinion polls at the weekend showed the coalition was likely to retain a comfortable, but sharply reduced, majority after Mr. Chirac risked his seven-year presidency by calling the

snap poll almost 10 months early.

A Sofres poll for Monday's Le Figaro newspaper showed the RPR-UDF coalition and allies winning around 329 seats, the Socialists, other left and Ecologists 202, the Communists 23 and the National Front one seat.

Socialist leader Lionel Jospin brushed off the conservative poll lead in a radio interview, saying: "The campaign is far from over. A one-point swing is 30 seats, two points is 60 and three points 90 and a changed majority."

He said he favoured public executions of hostage takers as a deterrent. "The people say that we need to shoot criminals and agree. I will do this," he said.

Mr. Maskhadov, the chief of staff of the guerrilla army which dealt the Russian forces a humiliating defeat, was elected president in January, after the withdrawal of the last Russian soldiers.

He said he favoured public executions of hostage takers as a deterrent. "The people say that we need to shoot criminals and agree. I will do this," he said.

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## Gunmen kill 2 policemen, free prisoner in Pakistan

KARACHI (R) — Gunmen killed two policemen and wounded two others and a patient at a hospital in Karachi Monday before escaping with a prisoner under treatment, police said.

At least three gunmen were involved in the early morning attack on the government's Civil Hospital in a busy district of the city.

Police identified the escaped prisoner as Asghar Shah, an activist of the Sindhi nationalist Jiyee Sind Party who was serving a 25-year jail term.

Separately, police said the bullet-riddled body of a 30-year-old activist of the ethnic Mohajir National Movement (MQM) had been found in a sack in another part of the city Sunday.

No group has claimed responsibility for the death of the MQM party worker, whose body bore marks of torture.

Violence between the MQM and a splinter MQM-Haqiqi faction has risen since national and provincial elections on Feb. 3.

After the polls, the MQM, led by London-

based Altaf Hussain, joined with Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's Pakistan Muslim League to form a coalition government in Sind province, of which Karachi is the capital.

Over 800 people were killed in ethnic, political and sectarian strife in the southern port city last year following more than 2,000 in 1995.

Neighbourhood reconstruction had been entrusted to the private sector and an organisation dubbed Rebuild L.A. (RLA) — which had given itself five years to achieve its goal.

RLA's recently released final report estimates private sector investment to repair the damage at \$389 million. The U.S. government has spent some \$900 million.

But that falls far short of RLA consultant McKinsey And Co's estimate that it would cost \$6 billion to revitalise Los Angeles' poor and damaged neighbourhoods.

"Much needs to be done," RLA reported. "For example, many Korean merchants never reopened their stores, and joblessness among blacks and Latino teenage males remains unacceptably high."

The riots left South Central with fewer liquor stores than before: There had been 700. Two hundred were burned down and 165 never reopened.

## Five years on, Los Angeles still scared by race riots

LOS ANGELES (AFP) — Five years after riots reduced parts of Los Angeles to burning rubble, the city has yet to erase the scars left by the destruction whose effects still mar the urban landscape.

Some 60.6 per cent of the population believes similar violence will "probably" erupt sometime in the next five years, according to a recent poll by the University of Loyola-Marymount here.

On April 29, 1992, an all-white jury's acquittal of the white policemen who were videotaped beating black motorist Rodney King inflamed racial passions, igniting three days of burning and looting.

The violence left at least 50 people dead, 2,300 injured and more than 1,100 buildings damaged or destroyed. Los Angeles' different ethnic groups all came away with different explanations of the riots.

Many Koreans blamed black Americans. Black Americans saw the violence as a consequence of white America's racism. Latinos refer to it as "Los Quemazones" — the large flames — while Koreans call it "Sa-Ee-Gu": April 29.

The made-for-television movie Riot, to be shown exactly five years after the violence that followed the unpopular court verdict, showcases the views of this sprawling city's different racial communities.

The film, to be shown Tuesday, presents four directors' renditions of the very different Asian, African-American, Latino and white perspectives of the violence, which reduced parts of Los Angeles to burning rubble.

The University of Loyola-Marymount reported that 36.4 per cent of those polled believe the 1992 riots made them more sensitive to the problems faced by other races.

Only slightly fewer — 28.7 per cent — say they felt more

resentment towards other communities. Nearly half of those polled, 49.3 per cent, said race relations had improved since the violence.

But 58.7 per cent believe race relations are still poor and 47.8 per cent think things are getting worse.

Businesses in South Central, the neighbourhood at the centre of the riots, have still not been rebuilt, dotting the economically deprived area with vacant lots. All the city requires is that the owners put a fence around them.

Some 200 properties have remained empty since the riots, according to a study by the Los Angeles Times. And only one-third of all buildings damaged or destroyed have been repaired or rebuilt.

"You see, it looks terrible," South Central resident Lucille Hooper told the newspaper. "They haven't built anything. It looks dead, a ghost town."



## Jordan Times

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## Overall strategy needed

CAN A mini-Arab summit, grouping Jordan, Egypt, the Palestinians and Syria break the current deadlock in the peace process created by the Israeli headline government decision to build a new settlement on Jabal Abu Ghneim?

That depends on whether the summit will be held in accordance with Washington's or Damascus's terms. Washington wants the process to continue no matter what losses the Palestinians face at the hands of their powerful interlocutor, Israel. Damascus, meanwhile, wants the process to continue to be deadlocked in order to put more pressure on Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to yield on the peace front with Syria. Here also, Damascus is unconcerned with Palestinian losses. Egypt, meanwhile, is hard-pressed between the American and Syrian positions. On the one hand, Cairo wants to please its Arab ally and strengthen its leading role in the Arab World; on the other, it wants to neutralise a strong segment in the U.S. Congress that portrays Egyptian policies as increasingly anti-Israeli.

That is precisely why Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak is indecisive on the issue of the summit and who should attend it. To placate the Syrians Mr. Mubarak calls for a foursome Arab summit, and to pacify the Americans he proposes a summit grouping Jordan, Egypt, the Palestinians and Israel.

As far as Jordan is concerned the aim of any gathering should be clear: the peace process must go on and be enhanced by mutual confidence-building measures from all the sides. While the Arabs, particularly the Palestinians, agree that terrorism should neither be tolerated nor condoned, they also believe that the true spirit of peace cannot prevail if the Israeli leaders continue to decide the fate of the occupied territories, including Jerusalem, on their own.

The Arab leaders, including President Mubarak himself, His Majesty King Hussein and President Arafat, have all tried to influence the Israeli prime minister to reverse his decision to build on Jabal Abu Ghneim, but to no avail. A more meaningful approach would be to hold a mini-Arab summit that would chart a joint strategy that would give a new impetus to the peace process. A declaration by the four Arab leaders that they would work towards a full settlement to the Arab-Israeli conflict in all its aspects before the end of the year would be a tool with which to pressure the Israeli side. That commitment, coupled with an equal pledge to fight all forms of terrorism, would certainly lead to a fresh start to the peace talks. Of equal importance is to get all other Arab parties, probably at an expanded Arab summit, to endorse such a strategy and lobby it with the American administration.

## ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

FAILURE ON the part of the Israeli judiciary to level charges against Netanyahu or indict him over accusations of breaching public trust and fraud no doubt caused frustration to the Arabs who were hoping that the scandal will precipitate his downfall, said Fahed Faneh, a writer for Al Ra'i. But one good thing resulted from this episode: it weakened the Israeli prime minister in the eyes of the Israeli public and could undermine his political career, he said. However, the scandal and the decision not to charge Mr. Netanyahu brought about two unfavourable situations to the Arabs, especially those affiliated to the peace camp among them, according to the writer. He said that having been weakened by the latest blow, Mr. Netanyahu is not expected to take difficult decisions concerning a compromise agreement with the Palestinians in the final status negotiations. What is more disturbing, he said, is the prospect of Mr. Netanyahu's leaning more and more on his allies, the religious parties and the extremists in his government, in an attempt to appease them and back his efforts to remain in power. This means that Mr. Netanyahu would be giving these extremist factions more and more concessions and advantages, at the expense of the Palestinian people's rights and lands.

A WRITER for the weekly Shihani urged the Arab countries to retaliate against hostile American attitudes directed at them in general and the Iraqi and Palestinian people in particular. Noting that the U.S. continues to impose an unjust embargo on the Iraqis, Riyadh Hroub said that the Americans are showing their enmity to and total disregard of the feelings of the Arabs and their pilgrims — the old Muslims who performed the haj rites to Mecca — and threatening to punish Iraq for what Washington considers a violation of the U.N. sanctions. Furthermore, Washington has displayed total animosity towards the Palestinians who continue to suffer under Israeli repression by twice vetoing Security Council resolutions that condemn Israel's actions and demand that it desist from illegal practices in the occupied Arab lands, noted the writer. Why cannot the Arabs refuse to maintain the embargo on the Iraqi state and defend their dignity and their honour, asked the writer.

## The View from Fourth Circle

## Listen and hear the enduring voices of compassion and compromise

NEW PUBLIC opinion polls of Israelis and Palestinians reveal important trends that accurately reflect the situation on the ground and in people's minds: a short-term hardening of positions and a tendency towards political or military terror, combined with a longer term acceptance of a political solution that responds to the legitimate rights of both sides. In other words, we witness the apparent dichotomy of short-term loss of faith in the peace process, but long-term acquiescence in a negotiated peace accord.

First, the bad news — the current, probably short-term, expression of hardline positions by both Israelis and Palestinians. A telephone survey late last month (by the Centre for Community Studies at Bar Ilan University, Jerusalem) showed that a solid majority of Jewish Israelis (57 per cent) thought the Israeli government "should stop the peace talks with the Palestinians in light of the Palestinian terror and the recent rising wave of disturbances in the territories." The poll also showed that 66 per cent of Jewish Israelis did not think it was possible to rely on Yasser Arafat to honour the peace agreements he signs, and 59 per cent thought the Israeli government should enter into final status negotiations with the Palestinians without carrying out the three further redeployments of Israeli troops required by the Oslo accords.

Another poll late last month by the independent Smith Research Centre showed that support for continued construction of the new housing settlement on Jabal Abu Ghneim/Har Homa had increased sharply, from 37 to 52 per cent of Jewish Israelis; at the same time, overall support for a permanent halt in construction had dropped, from 31 to 19 per cent. Those who favoured a temporary halt in construction and a continuation "at a more appropriate time" increased from 15 to 20 per cent of Jewish Israelis.

On the Palestinian side, this hardening of opinion is mirrored in the latest poll carried out in mid-April by the Centre for Palestine Research and Studies in Nablus, under the supervision of Dr. Khalil Shikaki. That poll showed that 60 per cent of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza supported the peace process — a significant majority, to be sure, but also a very sharp decline from the 79 per cent who expressed support in the previous poll in

late December. In the Gaza Strip alone, support for the peace process declined at an ever faster rate, from 87 to 61 per cent.

*"Amidst the understandable short-term fears, anger and retribution expressed by Israelis and Palestinians, we can also discern the voices of the larger, more reasonable and realistic Semitic political centre continuing to speak out for a compassionate compromise based on dual and equal rights for Israelis and Palestinians living in two adjacent states."*

Support for terror attacks such as the recent bombing of the "A Propos" café in Tel Aviv remained relatively high, at 40 per cent — and showed a nominal increase from 39 per cent support in December. Support for the Islamist political groups in Palestine has remained steady in recent months; about 10 per cent of those polled said they supported Hamas, and 2 per cent supported Islamic Jihad. Support for the mainstream Fatah group declined from December to April, from 45 to 41 per cent — suggesting that the declining enthusiasm for the peace process does not reflect growing support for the Islamist opposition, but rather a loss of credibility by Yasser Arafat's Fatah group.

Next, the good news: perhaps the most interesting, and hopeful, finding was that of the poll conducted among Israelis at the end of February by the Tel Aviv School of Strategic Studies, which showed that for the first time ever, a small majority of Israelis — 51 per cent — was

prepared to accept a Palestinian state. More interestingly, a much larger majority of Israelis — 77 per cent — predicted that a Palestinian state would be established within the coming decade. Perhaps this is an indication of future trends among Israelis. And only 31 per cent of Israelis were opposed to the return of the Golan Heights to Syria.

These findings suggest that the broad outline of a negotiated political settlement between Israelis and Palestinians leading to a two-state solution continues to coalesce in the minds of both sides — but this compromise solution also remains heavily vulnerable to short-term regressions due to the two principal concerns about Palestinian terror in the minds of Israelis and about Israeli settlements in the minds of Palestinians.

It would seem appropriate, therefore, for well-intentioned people on both sides to package these two important concerns into a new initiative that could restart the peace talks in a manner that would address these issues firmly and quickly. A majority on both sides still wants the peace process to continue and to lead to a two-state solution — but such continuation is firmly linked to progress on resolving the twin issues of terror and settlements.

Both these concerns are morally reasonable and politically manageable — because the overwhelming majority of Israelis clearly is not committed to Jewish settlements as an ideological or security imperative, and a corresponding majority of Palestinians does not accept terror as an appropriate or effective means of political struggle. Amidst the understandable short-term fears, anger and retribution expressed by Israelis and Palestinians, we can also discern the voices of the larger, more reasonable and realistic Semitic political centre continuing to speak out for a compassionate compromise based on dual and equal rights for Israelis and Palestinians living in two adjacent states.

The voices of reason are there in Palestine and Israel, should we wish to hear them and act on them. The military terror of the Palestinian hangers and the political terror of the Israeli settlers represent the failed, fading policies of a fearful past. Political leaders on both sides — and would-be mediators and peace-makers from further afield — should act on this fact while there is still time to do so.

## The role of the government in the economic development of Jordan

By Dr. Yusuf Mansur

WHAT IS the role of the government in the economy? What should the government produce? These two questions have puzzled many economists, both theoretical and applied (those who advise governments), for the longest time. Views on the topic vary from one extreme, where the government is to provide only military protection, to the other, where the government is involved in every aspect of the economy, including the production of goods and services.

Joseph E. Stiglitz, the chairman of the U.S. Council of Economic Advisers, in his keynote address at the World Bank Conference on Development Economics 1996, gave a thorough rejoinder, based on his experience as an outstanding scholar and an active economic adviser, to these questions upon which the present article is loosely based.

Governments should serve a major role in:

— Promoting education: It should be a major function of government. Countries that have stressed education have managed to accumulate human capital (an educated and skilled workforce), which is every bit as important as physical capital. Education creates an egalitarian society and political stability which is a prerequisite for sustainable long-term economic growth. In Jordan, the government may need to go as far as giving education coupons to parents who want to place their children in private schools because they offer a better quality education than that of public schools. These coupons are redeemable by the private schools (they cannot be used for other purposes) and are equivalent to the cost of educating a child in a public school. This, of course, is only one of many steps that can be taken to enhance the quality of education in Jordan.

— Promoting technology: It is true that the best research is that which is

performed in the private sector; however, countries such as the U.S. and Japan have successfully encouraged research either through direct or indirect government subsidies. Additionally, respect for patents and intellectual property rights is intrinsic to promoting technology and it is just as basic as the respect for property rights. Patents were granted as far as 1789 in the U.S., insuring protection to the owners of inventions through monopoly rights and thereby promoting technology and progress.

— Supporting the financial sector: The role of the financial sector is to gather, process and disseminate information, thus making it the heart and brain of the market system economy.

Markets usually fail in areas related to information where the problem of a moral hazard arises. (A moral hazard is an asymmetric information problem that occurs after a transaction. The lender is subject to the risk or hazard that the borrower will

engage in activities that may be undesirable or immoral from the lender's point of view; this, in turn, hinders the likelihood that the loan will be paid back). The promotion of measures of the utmost transparency (clarity of law) is a prerequisite for the success of government policy in this sector. Moreover, world-class bond and stock markets are needed in conjunction with the establishment of long-term debt facilities. New laws that are transparently clear can truly help Jordan; otherwise, opaque laws, similar to the those of the past, will only increase corruption and decrease the welfare of the country.

— Investing in infrastructure: The government should invest in the total infrastructure of the nation. Investment in roads and communications systems are minimum infrastructure requirements; institutional investment, such as property rights, contract and bankruptcy laws, policies that promote competition where it is viable, and policies which regulate mar-

kets where competition is not viable, should not be ignored.

— Preventing environmental degradation: Environmental clean-up is a very costly endeavour which most developing countries cannot afford. Imposing strict environmental standards may destroy the competitive advantage of a nation, particularly if it is a developing nation. However, since waste and lack of environmental protection is dangerous both in the short and long-terms, governments in developing countries such as Jordan may need to focus on promoting and rewarding those industries that are environment friendly.

— Creating and maintaining a social safety net and providing access to basic healthcare services: Development and change invariably create victims, whereby some groups are unable to adjust to the change or do not benefit as others do from it. Jordan is not an exception. Providing rehabilitation and vocational

training to the poor and subsidies to handicraft and small-scale enterprises is an important component of actions the government take. But excesses and bureaucracy-generating measures should be avoided; herein lies the balance and the skill in designing that optimal policy. Public awareness of the benefits that can be received from the system through transparent and clear procedures would eliminate some of the possible abuses.

Change must not come from one side only — in this case the government. If the government is to do all the above, people must move at the grassroots level to welcome the change and adopt it in their every-day manner of production and behaviour. Policies remain ineffective if governments act in isolation from the people and, as a result, end up creating more government for the few. Change must be total, dynamic and gradual: from the top down and, most importantly, from the bottom up.

## Winking at Croatian fascism — will the world sit still, again?

By A.M. Rosenthal

NEW YORK — Hitler had no executioners more willing, no ally more passionate than the fascists of Croatia. They are returning, 50 years later, from what should have been their eternal grave, the defeat of Nazi Germany. The Western allies who dug that grave with the bodies of their servicemen have the power to stop them, but do not.

Croatian fascists, known as the Ustashe, fought alongside German troops against Serbs, Muslims and Croats who were trying desperately, and vainly, to block the Nazi conquest of Yugoslavia. In 1941, Hitler rewarded Croatian fascists by carving out a Croatian state and letting them run it. They did not let him down.

The Ustashe slaughtered Serbs, Jews and non-fascist Croats — and with such glee and such cruelty that their name became a terror and stench throughout Europe.

Croatia disappeared with Hitler's annihilation in 1945. A half-century later, the West created a new Croatia by

recognising the secession from Yugoslavia of Croatian nationalists led by Franjo Tudjman.

Not all were fascists, by any means, but now the Ustashe is running in elections, brutalising its enemies — Croat, Serb or Jew. Mr. Tudjman is giving them what they need most: presence, and the rewriting of history.

Two documents are a short course on the Ustashe. To honour the murdered and protect the future, read them.

From Pages 323 to 328 of the Encyclopaedia of the Holocaust (Macmillan): "More than a half million Serbs were killed, a quarter million expelled, 200,000 forced to convert to the Catholicism of the Croatian Fascists."

"Thousands were buried from mountain tops, others were beaten to death, entire villages were burned down, women raped, people sent on death marches in the middle of winter, still others starved to death." Ante Pavelic, the Ustashe leader, announced that the Jews would be "liquidated within a very short

time." They were, most of the 40,000.

But some chosen as victims did survive. Study the picture of the children after the camps were freed. They wear only bones and lightened skin. Serbs? Jews?

The second document is fine journalism from Croatia by New York Times correspondent Chris Hedges about the rebirth of fascism there: The bullying, the siege-ing and heiling in Croatia, the whole nastiness. Most important is the increasing work of Mr. Tudjman (a long-time Holocaust denier) to recast the fascists as patriots and founders of the new Croatia.

This man likes to talk about how he himself fought German soldiers. Now a major political, military and financial beneficiary of the West, he permits pictures of fascists dead and alive to be plastered around the country. He gives special status and pensions to Ustashe veterans.

He tried to get the body of the killer-chief Pavelic returned from Spain, where

he had fled, and buried with honour in Zagreb — like reburying Hitler under the linden. The family objected. So he brought back another Ustashe killer, this one alive, and made him a member of parliament.

Western recognition of Croatia was pushed hardest by Germany despite warnings from Bosnia Muslims that the timing could set off war among themselves, Serbs and Croats.

Franjo Tudjman is now ours. The West cannot evade responsibility for the rebirth of fascism in Croatia. Peter Galbraith, U.S. ambassador to Croatia, told me he had denounced Croatian ethnic cleansing of Serbs last year, and considered the glorification of the Ustashe an insult to Croats who fought Nazis, and to American veterans of World War II. Mr. Tudjman and his fascist protégés brush off ambassadorial protest with insult.

Would he brush off the presidents of the United States and France, the British prime minister or the chancellor of Germany if they took

action to stop Croatian fascism? Such as denouncing the Tudjman buildup of the Ustashe, then reducing Western representation to sub-ambassadorial and slashing economic help to Croatia — the whole list?

That will not change the Ustashe or improve Mr.

Tudjman's sickness of body and character. But it could force him to end fascist rehabilitation work. Or has the West become so sick itself that it will permit Croatian fascism to live on beyond the grave?

The New York Times

## LETTERS

## Defining innocence

To the Editor:

I READ with wry amusement, the comment attributed to the prosecutor in the case of Timothy McVeigh — the American accused of exploding a federal building in Oklahoma. According to Prosecutor Hartzler, "McVeigh liked to consider himself a patriot, someone who could start the second revolution. Our forefathers did not fight innocent women and children."

Our forefathers did not fight innocent women and children? Perhaps Mr. Hartzler should refer back to the indexes of his history books, under the categories of Native Americans (decimation of) and African slavery. Or were these not "innocent" women and children?

Carolyn Azzam, Amman



## Features

# The general election in the United Kingdom — how does it work?

By Alan Osborn

THE UNITED Kingdom's long and honourable tradition of parliamentary democracy will be on show again this year when the country's voters take part in the first general election since 1992.

There are some 44 million registered voters in the U.K. and it is expected that about 75 per cent of them will turn out to write a cross on a piece of paper indicating the man or woman they wish to represent them as a member of parliament (MP) in the House of Commons at Westminster.

The simplicity of U.K. parliamentary voting is probably unique in the modern world. So, too, is the brief duration of the official election campaign, barely four weeks after the prime minister announces the polling date — May 1 this time.

### First past the post

But the most striking difference between U.K. electoral procedures and those of almost all other countries lies in the U.K.'s faithful adherence to the system that uses a horse-racing analogy and is called "first past the post".

The whole of the U.K. — that is to say England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland — is divided into

geographical constituencies. Following the changes made in recent years to reflect population movements, there will be 659 constituencies in 1997 — eight more than at the last election.

The largest constituency in terms of voters is the Isle of Wight with 101,680 voters; the smallest: the Western Isles in Scotland, with 23,208. The average-size seat in England contains 69,238 voters. In Scotland and Wales, the average has just over 55,000, reflecting their lower population density.

Whatever the size, the procedures are the same throughout the country: the voter will be presented with a list of perhaps 10 candidates (though more commonly just three or four), identified by party, and must choose just one.

Whoever wins the most crosses becomes the new member of parliament for that constituency even though he or she may have attracted far fewer than half of all the votes. In turn, the political party with the most MPs in the new parliament is called on by Queen Elizabeth II to form a government.

### Not enough seats

It is not unprecedented to find that a political party wins more popular votes

across the country at large than its rivals but fails to gain enough seats to form a government. In 1974, the Conservatives won 37.9 per cent of the popular vote to Labour's 37.1 per cent, but ended up with four fewer seats.

Conversely, the Conservative government elected in 1983 and 1987 had huge majorities of over 100 seats in the Commons even though the party's share of the popular vote was 42 per cent. By contrast, the Liberal Democrats attracted 17.8 per cent of the votes in 1992 but won only 20 seats because their support was spread out across a large number of constituencies.

This may be unfair to the Liberal Democrats but it does underline one of the main benefits of the first-past-the-post system, namely the way it can keep politically extreme and potentially destabilising groups out of power.

The U.K. prime minister and head of government is normally the leader of the party with most seats in the Commons. The Royal Prerogative, enshrined in centuries of British history, empowers the Queen to request an MP to form her government and normally the choice is clear.

But if no party has an overall majority in the new House of Commons, the queen may request any

party leader to form a government on the basis that he or she can win sufficient support in parliament from one or more of the other parties to govern effectively. In such circumstances, which underline the importance of the monarch's constitutional role, the prime minister could come from a party that has won fewer votes than others.

This makes it clear that, unlike government leaders in other countries, the prime minister of the U.K. is not directly voted into office by the public, though he or she must be an elected MP. Any citizen may stand for election to the House of Commons with certain exceptions such as bankrupts, prisoners, the clergy, peers and a range of public servants and officials. Nomination by 10 electors is required, along with a deposit of £500, forfeited if the candidate receives fewer than five per cent of votes cast.

The system encourages the participation of fringe candidates — some openly frivolous — but in practice virtually all aspiring MPs belong to the Conservative, Labour or Liberal Democrat parties or the six regionally based parties such as the Scottish Nationalists, the Welsh Plaid Cymru or the Northern Ireland organisations.

Even a small party with

no more than six MPs can hold the balance of power in a hung parliament although this is a rare situation in modern British politics.

### MPs local appeal

Candidates are selected simply by the parties' local organisations and not always on the basis of intelligence, loyalty and speaking ability: sometimes a man or woman with distinction outside politics is chosen. Sometimes it is a former MP ousted from another seat, sometimes a person with a long record of party service and sometimes one with particular local appeal.

Individual candidates' electioneering expenses are strictly controlled by law but no such restraints apply to the parties that traditionally spend large sums on publicity. This includes posters, newspaper advertisements, booklets and a number of party election broadcasts determined by the number of candidates the party has in the campaign and the number of MPs it held in the old parliament.

British election campaigns are noteworthy for the important role played by public opinion polls that are carried out by professional organisations on behalf of newspapers or parties and that cover marginal or other interesting contests as well as the national situation. Poll findings often influence the approach taken by the parties and provide the basis for much of the daily media comment on the campaign.

### Floating voters

It is generally accepted that up to a fifth of all British voters are "floating", which is to say that they will not make their

final choice until polling day or shortly before it. It is towards these people that the main media blitz of the campaign is directed by the party strategists.

Polling day in the U.K. is always on a Thursday. Voting takes place in thousands of polling stations — often schools that have been closed for the day — under the scrutiny of regional government officials. The marking of a cross against the candidate's name is done secretly behind a screen and the folded ballot paper is then deposited into a sealed box. The name and registration number of each voter is checked against an official list to prevent people voting more than once.

Most results are known within a few hours of the close of voting at 20:00 hours, although there is an unofficial contest among constituencies to be first to report, in some cases around 24:00.

Based largely on polls taken after the vote, computer-generated projections of the final count begin to appear early in the night. By 04:00 on Friday, the result is usually plain enough for the losing party to concede defeat and for the newspapers to carry comprehensive reports of the outcome later that day.

Television apart, there is probably little difference between election campaign in the U.K. today and those of 50 years ago. But this may not last much longer if there is a change of government in Britain this year. The recent setting up of a joint committee of the Labour and Liberal Democrat parties to consider constitutional reform may indicate that some limited steps might be taken towards a voting system more charitable to the smaller parties.

London Press Services

## Randa Habib's corner

### Who's to blame?

PEOPLE HERE are really incredible. Take for example our farmers. Some of them, from the eastern part of the country, were on TV a few days ago, explaining their due situation: they had lost all or most of their crops because of the frost wave which hit the Kingdom last month.

And as if having the opportunity to vent their problems on the air were not enough, the farmers in question pushed their luck and had the audacity to ask for financial facilities concerning the accumulating interest on their loans.

The reporter made the right comment: "Why weren't you more careful, and why don't you take appropriate precautions for such a recurrent mishap?"

As if an interviewer with a microphone in his hand knows better than those in the field. Indeed, the reporter knows more than the farmer who plants 60 million seeds a year, or the one who takes care of 50,000 trees and obtains an yearly yield equivalent to half a million dollars. He is even much more informative than those who have placed special heaters in plastic houses erected in the plain desert to cope with unexpected sharp drops in temperature, as we were shown on TV in that same programme.

The interviewer was absolutely right: The farmers were to blame for the frost and its detrimental effect on crops. Case dismissed and closed.

This situation reminds me of a similar case. Children playing outdoors in the streets, running the risk of falling victims to car accidents. Or mothers strolling with baby carts in the main road, as sidewalks keep on shrinking every time the municipality decides to widen an existing street.

After all, why should we focus on having more recreation parks and open spaces for the young ones? The solution is much simpler: Parents should lock their children in the houses. Locked spaces lead to blocked minds.

## Turkish court fines publisher for book

ISTANBUL (R) — A court on Monday fined the publisher of a book on Turkey's traditional adversary Armenia for spreading "separatist propaganda".

State-run Anatolian news agency said the state security court first sentenced Ayse Nur Zarakolu to six months in jail for publishing "The Armenian Taboo" by Yves Ternon, but immediately commuted the sentence to a fine of \$746.

The book deals with the history of conflict between Turkey and Armenia. Turkey rejects claims by Christian Armenia that Turks massacred 1.5 million Armenians in 1915.

The Appeals Court had already annulled an earlier two-year sentence against Mr. Zarakolu in the case, brought in 1984.

She was previously fined a nominal amount for publishing a U.S.-based Human Rights Watch's report connected with Turkey's military campaign against Kurdish separatists in the southeast of the country.

Turkey and Armenia have no diplomatic relations but Armenian President Levon Ter-Petrosyan was in Turkey on Monday to take part in a meeting of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Forum.

## Origins and history of the U.K. parliament

By Robert Shrimley

DAVID LLOYD George — one of the United Kingdom's greatest prime ministers — once summed up the unique character of the House of Commons by observing that "for anyone with politics in his blood, this place is like a pub to a drunkard."

Other politicians have been less enamoured with the place that is often seen as having the air of a fusty gentlemen's club. One female critic said it was "not so much a gentlemen's club as a boys' boarding school". If the Commons does seem a little antiquated, it is perhaps understandable. After all, its traditions and ways of doing things have built up over more than 700 years.

### Tax resistance

The origins of parliament date back to 1258 and has one of the oldest political maxims of all: No taxation without representation. Simon de Montfort, who was leading the barons' campaign of resistance to tax demands of King Henry III, summoned representatives of the towns together in a prototype parliament.

This was the beginning of the system that we know today. Henry responded by convening parliaments of loyal peers sitting with representatives of boroughs and counties. It was only in 1350 that the Lords and Commons — then knights and gentlemen — separated and formed the two houses we now know.

Parliaments were summoned only intermittently at first when the king or queen needed money and required a vote of parliament to raise the funds. But as the role of the state and bureaucracy grew, parliament became an almost

permanent feature of public life.

The role of the Speaker of Commons dates from 1376, when it was not the comfortable job it is today. Now the speaker keeps order and upholds the rules of parliament but then the job was to act as a go-between of the House of Commons and the king.

A lasting tradition of that time is that whenever a new speaker is elected, he or she is dragged to the chair and must feign unwillingness to take the job. Now it is all for show but that lack of enthusiasm was genuine in the days where unwelcome news could lead to the speaker's execution. More than one representative of the Commons lost his head when the king lost his temper.

### Consent for law

By 1455, it had become accepted that for a bill to become law, the consent of the House of Commons, House of Lords and the crown were needed. It remains the case to this day.

The Commons set up home in Westminster in 1547, where it has remained ever since, although its original home in St. Stephen's Chapel was destroyed by fire in 1834. The present Palace of Westminster with the clock tower known around the world as Big Ben was built on the site of its charred remains (Big Ben is the name of the bell inside the clock tower).

The decisive events in the development of the Commons came in the 17th century in the civil war and its consequences. Parliament went to war with the king, Charles I, in a conflict with led to his execution in 1649 and the rule of Oliver Cromwell, as protector.

Although the monarchy was restored in 1660 under Charles II, it was understood that the crown had ceded the right to tax and spend to parliament. Again, it was parliament that proved decisive in ousting the Catholic monarch, James II, in the so-called Glorious Revolution in 1688-89.

### Rotten boroughs

Even then the vote was restricted to the wealthiest individuals. A number of MPs' districts, or "seats", were known as "rotten boroughs" and were in the gift of a wealthy landowner. One seat, Dunwich, still returned a Member of Parliament (MP) even though it had sunk into the sea.

This absurd situation was finally remedied in 1832 in the first Great Reform Act that extended the vote. Subsequent acts extended the right to vote further, but extraordinarily, it was only as recently as 1928 that all sane adults were given the vote.

The final group to gain the basic right were women (restricted to those aged over 30), from 1918. This restriction was reduced to 21 (same age as men) in the so-called "flapper vote" of 1928. It has taken women even longer to make a significant impact on parliament.

This election may be the first that results in more than 100 women MPs — still less than a sixth of the total of seats that this year has been increased to 659.

The primacy of the Commons over the Lords is also relatively recent. A lord (the Marquess of Salisbury) was prime minister at the turn of the century and the supremacy of the Commons was assured only in 1911 with the parliament act that prevented peers from overruling finance

measures.

The first reform bill brought newer members from constituencies outside London to Westminster for the first time and they lived in clubs near parliament. The Reform Club in Pall Mall was set up to provide accommodation for out-of-town MPs who could not afford their own house.

### MPs who pair

Perhaps this explains the clubby atmosphere in the commons as MPs socialise with members from rival parties and set up their own dining clubs. Some MPs also "pair". This is when pairs of MPs from the two main parties agree that both will miss a vote so cancelling out each other's absence.

A regular pair is highly desired and it is a relationship of absolute trust. One MP observed: "You can cheat on your wife, but never lie to your pair." This socialising and bonhomie between opponents can confuse those who are new to the place.

An oft-repeated parliamentary anecdote — very likely true — recounts the story of the young, newly elected MP arriving in Westminster and being shocked to discover the degree to which members from opposing parties socialised together.

"Should we really be mixing with the enemy?" he asked a more experienced colleague. The older and much-wiser MP replied: "The other side are just the opposition... your enemies are those who sit with you."

LPS

## Ruling party wins majority

(Continued from page 1)

IIP was the smaller party in a coalition that led Yemen since the war, and neither side has ruled out another coalition if GPC fails to win a majority. The coalition, however, was tense at times, and IIP often acted as an opposition party.

"It's difficult to imagine what we're going to do," said Najib Ghanem, a member of IIP political bureau. "We have

to wait. The picture is still unclear." IIP, which preaches a tolerant Islam and accepts democracy, is the Arab world's only Islamic party to have gone from opposition to serving in a coalition government through free elections.

Results had been expected Monday, but polling officials said delays were caused by the high turnout and confusion over the large number of symbols used to represent candi-

dates on the ballots.

The elections monitoring committee, an independent group, said its monitors had preliminary figures from 108 constituencies. It said the congress appeared to win 62 of the seats and IIP 20, with the rest going to independents and smaller parties. Among the winners were two women, its informal tally indicated. Polling officials refused to confirm the numbers.

Violence that killed 11 people Sunday cast a shadow over

the vote, but the government insisted it was not related to the elections. In one incident, a guard who was said to have gone berserk opened fire on other guards and election workers, killing eight.

Monitors reported scattered violations ranging from trying to carry guns into polling places to using government cars for campaigning. But independent monitors said the violations were relatively minor and should not interfere with the results.



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# Anani underlines need for understanding WTO requirements in order to profit

By Ghaila Alul  
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Since Jordan is preparing to join the World Trade Organisation (WTO) it should work hard to meet the organisation's requirements if it is to benefit from trade and investment opportunities, Deputy Prime Minister for Development Affairs Jawad Anani said Monday.

In his opening speech to a conference entitled "The Reality of Free Trade: International Conference on WTO-Accession," Dr. Anani said: "We need seminars like this one in order to educate ourselves on the requirements which we must continue to fulfil in order to reap the best results in terms of trade, investment, technology and know-how, and last but not least, greater financial assistance."

The conference, organised by Friedrich Naumann Foundation in cooperation with the Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), discussed the impact of the WTO on the region as well as the challenges facing developing countries wishing to join the organisation.

Dr. Anani said the partnership agreement Jordan initiated with the European Union (EU) early this month "stands as a test to Jordan's capability to penetrate new markets and to assert itself as a new emerging economy."

The Jordan-EU agreement, as well as the bilateral

investment treaty the Kingdom initiated with the United States during His Majesty King Hussein's recent visit to Washington, should open new opportunities and smooth the way towards an agreement with the WTO which is expected to be concluded by the end of 1998, Dr. Anani said.

"We are ardently pursuing this goal, regardless of the challenges it poses, as we want to pursue the promises embodied in it," he said.

Dr. Anani added that Jordan is "fully engaged in taking more concrete steps to boost investments, enhance its exports, improve the quality of products, downsize, privatise and decentralise in order to arrive at the civil society for which we aspire."

Ministry of Trade, Industry and Supply Secretary General Mohammed Smadi told the meeting that although Jordan is working to implement the economic reform programme by improving its investment climate and introducing new economic legislation, challenges still face the Kingdom in its goal of accession to the WTO.

Dr. Smadi added that Jordan needs to increase the capacity of its industrial sector as well as look into means of attracting direct foreign investments.

He added that Jordan also needs to work on implementing internationally acceptable Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) laws which could greatly affect

the Kingdom's pharmaceutical sector, the country's second largest exporter.

"We have been preparing ourselves throughout the past 10 years. But much work needs to be done in preparing the legal framework for IPR," said Dr. Smadi.

He said that Jordan needs to open its markets in certain sub-sectors, such as the insurance and construction sectors.

"According to the WTO means our markets have to be fully open," Dr. Smadi asserted.

He called on the private sector to technologically rehabilitate the industrial sector in accordance with international standards and specifications.

"The challenges are big, but the opportunities are big as well. We have to utilise the opportunities in order to lessen the negative impact for the accession to the WTO," Dr. Smadi concluded.

Mohsen Helal, regional advisor for WTO at ESCWA, said joining the WTO would enable any country to penetrate world markets which would therefore ensure that its products and services are internationally marketed.

He indicated that seven Arab countries have already joined the WTO and five others are requesting to join.

The WTO, previously known as the General Agreement for Tariffs and Trade (GATT), includes 123 member countries and

is therefore considered a large bloc, Dr. Helal said. He asserted that Arab countries can no longer afford to isolate themselves from the WTO.

Dr. Anani called for the creation of economic blocs in the Middle East in order to confront the challenges facing the region in the course of joining the WTO.

He said the region assumes an important role in the global economy because of the presence of oil. But, he added that if petroleum sources run out, a centre for the Middle East within the global economy needs to be created to guarantee freedom of investment, profitability and employment.

Representative of the Friedrich-Naumann Foundation in Jordan and Lebanon Ulrich Vogt told the meeting that an international open market cannot be achieved if a large gap continues to exist between poor and rich countries.

The conference also discussed the Egyptian experience in connection with economic reform and free trade as well as the impact of free trade agreements on the Palestinian economy.

Mohammad Halaqah, Director General of the Jordan Export Development and Commercial Centres Corporation (JEDCO) talked about the experience of the export sector in Jordan.

REUTERS

REUTERS

## The Business of Information

Major Currencies & Cross Rates									
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	CAD	ITL	SGD	FRF
US Dollar	-	1.7282	0.6160	1.4691	126.70	1.3994	1714.20	1.9438	5.8265
DE Mark	0.5787	-	0.6563	0.5447	7.36	0.8204	993.72	1.3246	5.3768
GB Sterling	1.6213	2.3045	-	2.3837	205.61	2.2716	2784.98	3.1569	9.4822
CHF Franc	0.6807	1.1745	0.5180	-	68.25	0.8422	1167.83	1.3245	5.3648
JP Yen	0.0079	1.3634	0.4656	1.1588	-	1.1037	15.53	1.5132	5.0967
CAD Dollar	0.7144	1.2252	0.4456	1.0364	0.70	-	923.87	1.3994	4.1691
IT Lira	0.0006	1.0075	0.3585	0.8856	1355.20	0.8157	-	11.33	3.3970
SG Dollar	0.5144	0.878	0.3155	0.7105	55.14	0.7105	362.25	-	2.8965
FR Franc	0.1710	0.2986	0.1056	0.25046	21.72	0.2401	33.35	33.3500	-

Energy		
Oil	Last	Previous
Brent	18.30	18.35
WTI	18.25	18.25
Bony	18.30	18.35
Dubai	15.92	16.25
UL Gas	194.00	193.00

Mid-East Currencies					
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY
SA Riyal	0.2666	0.4610	0.16426	0.39188	33.0068
Yemen	0.2754	0.4778	0.16785	0.40042	34.2435
KW Dirham	3.2675	5.68505	2.02511	4.83092	410.84
Qatar	3.6737	6.3771	2.33356	5.5622	468.37
CY Pound	1.9392	3.3511	1.1935	2.8482	245.688

Metal Prices		
Metal	Bid	Offer
Gold (oz)	339.7	340.2
Silver (oz)	8.88	8.97
Platinum (oz)	373	374
AL (3 Months)	1829	1832
CU (3 Months)	2359	2362
ZN (3 Months)	1268	1269
Lead (3 Months)	627	628
Ni (3 Months)	7446	7450

Currency Deposit Rates (Bid)						
Period	1-	3-	6-	9-	12-	Year
USD	5.56	5.59	5.93	6.12	6.32	
DEM	5.56	5.59	5.93	6.12	6.32	
JPY	0.53	0.49	0.45	0.51	0.59	
CHF	4.56	4.59	4.93	5.12	5.32	
FRF	3.20	3.40	3.49	3.51	3.54	
SGD	4.56	4.59	4.93	5.12	5.32	
ITL	6.58	6.59	6.89	6.82	6.83	

Main Equity Indices									
Bourse	Index	Value	Chng	% Chng	High	Low	Pr Cl		
New York	DOW JONES	6783.42	44.35	0.66	6788.23	6701.15	6738.87		
New York	S&P 500	1138.58	3.18	0.28	1139.50	1135.50	1135.50		
London	FT-SE 100	4389.7	20	0.46	4389.7	4351.2	4369.7		
Tokyo	NIKKEI 225	12243.7	57.2	0.47	12243.7	12185.1	12185.1		
Paris	CAC 40	2559.25	13.99	0.55	2559.25	2535.73	2535.73		
Frankfurt	DAX	3363.06	34.21	0.72	3377.21	3341.71	3377.21		

Energy		
Commodity	Last	Deliveries
Coffee (c/lb)	216.75	Spot
Cocoa (c/lb)	1467	Spot
Sugar (c/lb)	381.2	Spot
Wheat (c/lb)	17.7	Spot
Soy (c/lb)	24.7	Spot
Tea (c/lb)	0	Spot
Barley (c/lb)	0	Spot
Rice (c/lb)	460	Spot

JOD Cross Rates			
Currency	Buy	Sell	
US Dollar	0.708	0.710	
GB Sterling	1.444	1.446	
DE Mark	0.4075	0.4095	
CHF Franc	0.478	0.480	
FR Franc	0.1209	0.1215	
SG Dollar	0.352	0.354	
NL Guilder	0.3622	0.364	
IT Lira	0.0169	0.0171	

Source: Central Bank of Jordan.

## Major nations face test of resolve on dollar

WASHINGTON (R) — Economic policymakers from major industrial nations faced fresh questions about their resolve to stabilise currency rates on Monday as the dollar climbed on world currency markets.

Analysts said they expect the U.S. currency to rise even further in the weeks ahead and questioned whether the Group of Seven (G-7) had the will, or the way, to curb it.

"It's hard for the G-7 to stop the dollar on basis of economic fundamentals, which are still very positive," said Chris Iggo, chief economist at BZW Securities Inc.

U.S. interest rates are on the rise, making the dollar a more lucrative currency for investors to hold — no mat-

ter what the industrial nations may want.

The G-7 — Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan and the United States — warned Sunday of the dangers of big shifts in currency rates that could hurt world trade.

The dollar has risen by more than 50 per cent against the Japanese yen over the past two years, boosting the competitiveness of Japan's exporters on world markets and threatening to push up the Asian nation's trade surplus.

In a statement issued Sunday, the G-7 opposed wild swings in currency rates and said it would monitor the markets to see if their wishes were carried out.

"We agreed that exchange rates should reflect economic fundamentals and that

excess volatility and significant deviations from fundamentals are undesirable," the G-7 finance ministers and central bank chiefs said.

The initial reaction from the markets to the G-7's call for currency stability was not encouraging. In the immediate aftermath of the communique's release, the dollar pushed as high as 1.7389 marks, its highest level in over three years, and above 127 yen, just shy of a 4-1/2 year peak of 127.19 touched earlier this month.

Although Sunday's statement went beyond that issued by the G-7 at their last meeting in Berlin in February, it failed to single out explicitly the dollar/yen rate as a concern.

Nor did it specifically mention the possibility of G-7 nations intervening in the

markets to stop the dollar's rise by selling greenbacks.

Analysts said the absence of such language should open the door for additional dollar gains in the weeks to come.

"They clearly are not worried about the level of the dollar at the present time though they are worried about how fast it could accelerate," said Bob Savage, chief foreign exchange dealer at Lehman Brothers.

"This basically makes people comfortable with the idea we will see 1.80 in dollar/mark and 130 in dollar/yen," he added.

The G-7 meeting took place on the fringes of the semi-annual gathering of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank, which winds up on Tuesday.

## Peanuts



## Andy Capp



## Mutt'n'Jeff



## THE Daily Crossword

ACROSS

- Excitement
- Ludicrous act
- Use a mangle
- Of verse
- Attain
- Nucha
- Water vapor
- Empire State player
- Toed the mark
- Some Central Americans
- Fiendish
- Ammo for toy pistols
- Shelter
- Haggard heroine
- River horse
- Have debts
- Laws
- A Flintstone
- Old Line State player
- Cookie
- Princess in "Amadis de Gaul"
- Eam
- Marsh plant
- Nav. off.
- Ponds
- Holding tool
- Hip
- Became boring
- Telephone employee
- Headstrong
- Leonardo da —
- Girl in a musical comedy
- Defender of Troy
- Vagrants; var.
- On to
- Sounds in the night
- were a rich man
- Computer expert
- Volcano
- Author of "Golden Boy"
- Beginner's Latin verb
- Family member
- Clothe
- Navarro of the silents
- Chew noisily

by Bernice Gordon

GALA	REBUS	TOES
IBIS	EVITA	ARCH
REST	PILAR	NERO
LETITIA	LLHAN	GOUT
ROI	JOY	
ASP	ADOPTED	LAG
SHOES	CLIV	AUTO
PAINT	THE TOWN	RED
ERNE	REBA	IDEAL
NET	PARENTS	DRY
LAD	REO	
LET	ONESHAIR	DOWN
ALIT	SOAPS	OBIE
SILT	ISLET	RODE
HALO	NOTRE	SEED

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DOWN		
1 Vault	46 Tied	56 Sprang a —
2 Garfield's pal	49 Stage direction	57 Instrument
3 Messy	51 Dialect	58 — ben Adhem
4 Series of tones	52 Theatres	59 Nary a one
5 Synthetic fabric	53 Barbecue item	61 16
6 Destitution	54 Norse god	62 Woodwind, briefly
7 Playing marble	55 Tops	
8 Galid		
9 Chew noisily		

## HOROSCOPE FORECAST FOR TUESDAY, APRIL 29, 1997

By Thomas S. Pierson  
Astrologer, Carroll  
Righter Foundation

**ARIES:** (March 21 to April 19) If you have plans to make some improvements to your property, get several estimates or you won't get taken to the cleaners from this activity. Pay at least part of an overdue debt, thereby you can show good faith.

**TAURUS:** (April 20 to May 20) Try to be more diplomatic today, the world doesn't revolve around your opinions. Be more affectionate to your close friends and make later this evening, so that if the need arises you can gain their assistance.

**GEMINI:** (May 21 to June 21) You may be anxious to gain more assets today, however, you'll need more preparation to study every angle before you act. Finish any tasks you have left undone, thereby you can gain the admiration of a bigwig.

**MOON CHILDREN:** (June 22 to July 21) Much can be accomplished today if you enlist the assistance of some loyal friends. Stay at home later this evening and enjoy being in the company of your loved ones, so that you can relax for the days ahead.

**LEO:** (July 22 to August 21) Putting pressure on a superior today in order to achieve your goals would thwart your efforts. Don't react to an obstacle without thinking first for whatever best plan of action can be implemented for your success.

**VIRGO:** (August 22 to September 22) Some information you need can be gathered from a close friend today, however don't be forceful or rude or you won't get anywhere. Don't get into any new recreational activities at this time or there could be difficulties.

**LIBRA:** (September 23 to October 23) Be sure you don't inadvertently renege on a promise you have made or there could be difficulties with your reputation. Your mate is trying to avoid a disagreement with you later this evening, so be cooperative.

**SCORPIO:** (October 23 to November 21) A public matter has been difficult to solve for some time, however, with a little patience, you can easily achieve the desired results at this time. Later this evening will be good for seeking out old friends.

**SAGITTARIUS:** (November 22 to December 21) Arrange a time schedule for your career activities today, and your daily duties will seem much easier. Negligence could cause serious damage to your good reputation, so look carefully over every detail for errors.

**CAPRICORN:** (December 22 to January 20) Be more willing to go along with a plan of action your mate has today, since it is better than what you have in mind. Don't take any risk with your good reputation or there could be disastrous consequences.

**AQUARIUS:** (January 21 to February 19) Avoid becoming involved in a disagreement with a family member today, as this person is not impartial and will not yield on any points. Later this evening will be good for you to go out on the town with your mate.

**PISCES:** (February 20 to March 20) The people you will be around today have vastly different opinions from your own, so be diplomatic and don't push your point of view. Later this evening you can meet with fellow associates and devise a plan of action on a project.

Birthstone of April: Diamond — Amethyst



## Daily Business Beat

A review of news from the Arabic press

### Royal directives prompt moves to turn Aqaba into a free zone

**\*\* DURING HIS** attendance of a meeting for the Council of Ministers for development, His Majesty King Hussein directed the government to take immediate practical steps to transform Aqaba into a free zone at the earliest possible time. His Majesty also directed the government to conduct an urgent study on the possibility of transforming the city of Mafrq to a free zone also.

A high-level government source told Al Ra'i that the government has actually begun to take practical steps to translate the directives of the King to transform Aqaba into a free-zone enjoying all the privileges to make it a unique economic and investment attraction in the region. Al Ra'i said that Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali will soon hold an important meeting during which the previous plans and the new directives to transform Aqaba into a free zone will be evaluated.

During this meeting a comprehensive review of what should be done in this framework will be conducted and the necessary policies and legislations for the tourism and investment activity in the city will be examined. Furthermore, the meeting will look into the major projects which must be prepared to be set up in Aqaba and the means to finance them.

The Arabic daily said it has learnt that the concerned ministers have started to review the legislations which govern investments in free zones and to utilise the big advancement achieved in various areas in Aqaba in order to employ such progress in the drive to transform Aqaba into a free zone. The task of the ministers in this regard includes studying ideas which can attract investment and industrial projects in the city.

### Investor can proceed with investment if application gets delayed more than one week

**\*\* IN ITS** drive to encourage investment and curb routine, it has been learned from high-ranking official that Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali has issued strict instructions to process any application for any investor willing to invest in the country within one week. The official told Al Ra'i that Dr. Majali stressed that "if an application of any investor is delayed for more than a week, the investor can go ahead with the investment without referring to the government party which delayed processing the application."

### Zara wins equity, loan from member of World Bank Group

THE INTERNATIONAL Finance Corporation (IFC) has approved a loan of up to \$15 million and an equity investment of up to \$3 million in Zara, a tourism company in Jordan, to develop two hotel-and-business complexes in Amman and the Dead Sea. Suitable steps have been taken to ensure that both projects will be environmentally sustainable and that coastal and water resources at the Dead Sea project will be preserved and protected.

The first project is a 312-room hotel and business complex in Amman, comprising 44 apartments and well-equipped exhibition and conference facilities, which will be managed by Hyatt International. The second project is a wellness centre and a 231-room hotel complex on the north-eastern shore of the Dead Sea, combining medical and recreational facilities, which will be managed by Movenpick. The Dead Sea project will be the first hotel of international standard to be built on the Jordanian side of the Dead Sea.

## Phosphate company to distribute dividends at a rate of 24%

AMMAN (Petra) — The General Assembly of the Jordan Phosphate Mines Company (JPSC) Monday approved the distribution of JD 27.7 million to shareholders in cash dividends at a rate of 24 per cent of the company's 1996 profits.

The company's closing accounts for 1996 showed that the sales of phosphate brought in a total of JD 254.4 million in revenues compared to JD 226.1 million in 1995. The revenues came from sales of raw phosphate (JD 124.2 million) and phosphate-based fertilisers (JD 130.2 million).

The company's revenues other than sales of phosphate and fertilisers amounted to JD 3.9 million compared to JD2 million in the previous year. The report showed that the company's total expenses covering marketing and administrative services and mining fees amounted to JD 230.6 million compared to JD 212.6 million in 1995.

The net profit (tax-deductible) amounted to JD 27.7 million compared to JD 15.5 million in 1995 according to the annual report which said that the net profits were JD 13.3 million from raw phosphate sales and JD 14.4 million from fertilisers.

The company's revenues

## Finance firms see Global Depository Receipt issues doubling in Mideast in 1997

By Suleiman Al Khalidi  
Reuter

AMMAN — International Arab financial institutions said Monday they expected more GDR issues coming from the Middle East in 1997 as more companies in the region seek to tap the international equity market.

"We will see GDR volume going up gradually in 1997 and nearly double the 1996 level... it could reach around \$700 million in 1997," said Assad Razzouk, head of the Middle East investment banking division of Nomura International PLC.

Mr. Razzouk was speaking at the first seminar organised in Jordan on GDRs by Bankers Trust

Company and Nomura and Amman-based Atlas Investment Group.

Seven Global Depository Receipt (GDR) issues raising \$531.7 million have been launched in the Arab World since the first \$34 million GDR by Lebanese Audi Banque in 1995. Most were oversubscribed an average three times, mainly from investors outside the region, Mr. Razzouk said.

Three were from Lebanon, one from Morocco and three from Egypt in issues ranging from \$34 million to a \$119 million issue by Egypt's Commercial International Bank. The five GDR issues in 1996 totalled \$412 million with total demand of over \$1.65 billion, he said.

At least three to four

offerings from Egypt alone totalling \$700 million and one each from Jordan, Tunisia and Morocco are anticipated in 1997.

But a trend away from predominant banks and construction issues was taking shape.

"Now first timers are out of the way we expect corporations to access international markets. A second tier of companies is now coming through," said Omar Al Masri of Atlas.

Foreign investor interest in the region has been raised over the last few years with progress in free-market reforms especially in Morocco, Egypt and Lebanon which have resulted in sustainable growth and solid macro-economic fundamentals.

"In terms of foreign investment allocations for direct and portfolio investment the Middle East has been relatively nascent compared to other developing regions," said Mr. Masri.

Gregg Krowitz, vice-president of Bankers Trust, said GDR issues from the region were attracting interest.

GDRs have proven to have worked and have resulted in acceleration in foreign investment in the region because of the higher profile they give," Mr. Razzouk added.

Jordan, which lagged behind others although it was the first Arab country to

enter the International Financial Corporation index of emerging markets, was gaining more attention as it turned from one of the most expensive to the cheapest.

"In terms of various valuation measures, including price earnings ratio on a relative basis, Jordan now is cheapest," said Mr. Masri. Jordan's PE ratio was 10.7 per cent compared to a high 17.3 per cent in Morocco and Egypt's 13.3 per cent in 1997.

Bankers say Jordan Cement Factories, Arab Potash Company, both seeking funds for major industrial expansion projects, and larger banks such as Housing Bank and National Bank are among the firms which have received proposals to list GDRs.

But analysts said capitalisation of most firms in the region remains a major constraint on the pace of GDRs along with unwillingness of family dominated companies to loosen control.

"There are limited companies in these markets which do not have a market capitalisation which is in line with international market capitalisation standards," said Mr. Razzouk.

But expansion and higher sophistication by leading Arab bluechip companies will steer more firms towards GDRs to help them tap cheaper funds for future earning-related growth.

## Bumper bonuses risky — Bank of England

LONDON (AFP) — Reckless deals that can undermine financial stability are being encouraged by bonus pay-out schemes in the city of London, only two years after the near-collapse of Barings Bank, the Bank of England has warned.

The central bank, Britain's key regulator of the banking sector, said in a report in its newsletter, Financial Stability Review, that traders were encouraged to make "one-way" bets with their employers' money.

Under the bonus system, traders get higher remuneration if they take greater risks, but if their strategy fails, it is the employer, rather than the employee, who picks up the bill.

Bank official Daniel Davis, the author of the study, said: "The highest bonuses usually go to 'stars' who may feel compelled to justify their status by taking greater risks in the hope of making higher and higher profits."

The report warns the commercial sector of the high

risks associated with tempting young and inexperienced traders to gamble with vast amounts of company money by offering them huge financial rewards.

"It doesn't make much sense to have a bonus system which persuades traders to take on more and more risky deals and then a rather weak risk control system that comes along afterwards to check that they are behaving themselves," the bank's deputy governor, Howard Davies, told BBC radio.

In 1995, Britain's oldest merchant bank, Barings, was brought to its knees by its then rising star trader, Nick Leeson, a young man in his late 20s who earned windfall bonuses before the fraudulent nature of deals he made was discovered.

Mr. Leeson was sentenced to six and a half years in a Singapore jail for cheating and forgery, after he amassed and then tried to conceal losses of \$1.2 billion in risky derivatives trades.

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET											
HOUSING BANK CENTER AMMAN - SHARAFAT											
TELEPHONE: 607171 / 607179											
ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR MONDAY 26/04/1997											
PART	12 MONTHS	COMPANY'S NAME	P / E	DIV.	NO. OF	NO. OF	VALUE	OPEN	CLOSE	CHANGE	
HIGH	LOW				SHARES	SHARES	JD	PRICE	PRICE		
N	269.000	213.000	ARAB BANK	11.5	1.59	10	280	70290	252.00	251.00	1.00
	2.100	1.780	JOR. PETROL. CO.	8	0.00	16	2950	6923	1.78	1.74	0.04
	5.500	4.100	CALICO AMMAN BANK	9.3	3.23	1	1050	4725	4.50	4.50	0.00
	1.210	0.800	MED. EAST INV. BK.	63.1	0.00	1	500	480	0.77	0.76	0.01
	2.480	2.120	INDUSTRIAL DEV. BK.	5.3	5.97	3	1350	3148	2.34	2.33	0.01
	5.100	4.250	THE HOUSING BK.	13.0	2.84	5	2700	13096	4.85	4.86	0.01
	1.090	0.800	JOR. SUIF BANK	4.8	8.75	6	9500	7600	0.81	0.80	0.01
	2.850	1.040	HEIT. AL-HAL (SHARAFAT)	7	13.27	5	1100	1193	1.13	1.13	0.00
	1.440	1.000	PELLELAD. INV. BK.	9	0.00	9	2114	2355	1.12	1.13	0.01
BANK SECTOR TOTALS											
		INDEX: 190.67	CHANGE: -0.41			53	22664	110197			
+	2.500	1.760	JOR. FRENCH INSUR.	4.9	11.49	1	200	348	1.77	1.74	0.03
INSURANCE SECTOR TOTALS											
		INDEX: 116.81	CHANGE: -0.16			1	200	348			
	1.820	1.450	JOR. ELECTRIC PWR.	11.7	7.10	24	35100	59297	1.69	1.69	0.00
	9.250	7.800	JOR. HOTEL TOURISM	11.5	1.38	2	3466	27728	8.00	8.00	0.00
	7.500	6.000	VEHICLE OWNERS FID.	7.8	4.93	1	700	4970	7.10	7.10	0.00
	5.050	4.100	ARAB INTL. HOTELS	17.2	2.95	1	250	1088	4.30	4.35	0.05
	1.520	0.930	KHAY. PORTFOLIO	9	0.00	28	11155	10805	0.98	0.97	0.01
	1.030	0.820	REAL ESTATE INV.	12.3	6.74	3	2000	1780	0.90	0.89	0.01
	0.920	0.480	JORDAN INTL. TRAD.	24.6	0.00	1	250	120	0.49	0.48	0.01
	2.200	1.200	MED. EAST TRAV. EDUC.	18.3	0.00	2	500	600	1.21	1.20	0.01
	3.720	2.950	ARAB TRVL. TRV. EDUC.	8.0	0.00	1	550	1683	0.86	0.86	0.00
	2.230	1.650	UNITED CO.	7.9	6.63	3	450	747	1.68	1.66	0.02
	1.200	0.700	UNION LAND DEV.	8	0.00	3	580	350	0.70	0.70	0.00
SERVICE SECTOR TOTALS											
		INDEX: 103.39	CHANGE: +0.13			69	54921	109167			
+	1.250	0.930	ATTACHES	0	0.00	7	1550	1603	1.02	1.05	0.03
	3.800	3.060	JOR. CEMENT FACT.	20.9	2.74	22	5462	19931	3.77	3.85	0.08
	6.100	4.950	ARAB POTASH CO.	17.9	3.39	1	350	2065	5.90	5.90	0.00
	10.400	8.720	JOR. PETROL. REFINERY	10.3	7.85	14	1320	13436	10.18	10.18	0.00
	7.600	6.420	JOR. WOODSTOCK MILLS	10.7	3.02	1	1450	22639	6.65	6.62	0.03
	4.100	3.040	ARAB PHARM. RMF.	10.1	5.46	8	1500	5490	3.67	3.66	0.01
	7.250	5.550	JOR. CERAMIC TRD.	8.9	3.50	1	500	3575	1.10	1.15	0.05
	1.760	1.180	SAFTA INDUSTRIES	9	0.00	4	11000	13005	1.18	1.20	0.02
	5.910	4.250	DAR ALMAHA IV. INV.	12.7	4.30	5	1700	7922	4.70	4.65	0.05
	0.950	0.450	LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	10.6	0.00	38	44700	22380	0.52	0.50	0.02
	1.370	1.040	ARAB PAPER CONV. TRD.	10.6	6.64	3	1650	1720	1.05	1.04	0.01
	1.520	1.010	NATIONAL STEEL IND.	9	0.00	15	3250	3393	1.04	1.05	0.01
	0.910	0.540	NATIONAL TRD.	8.1	10.51	13	9150	8052	0.57	0.58	0.02
	1.540	0.730	INTERMED. PETRO. CHEM.	9	0.00	2	500	355	0.74	0.73	0.01
	1.150	0.630	JOR. MOCHROD INDG.	9	0.00	2	50	35	0.66	0.65	0.01
	3.730	2.130	HULI CARB. WIRE-SPAC	16.9	0.00	21	11000	3929	2.85	2.78	0.07
	1.370	0.570	JOR. SULFUR-CHRM	9	0.00	3	4100	2994	0.70	0.66	0.04
	1.670	1.120	ARAB PHARM. CHEM.	26.6	0.00	16	1350	1922	1.46	1.42	0.04
	1.780	1.140	JOR. ENDS. RESEARCHES	15.6	8.52	16	5200	7192	1.17	1.16	0.01
	1.230	0.840	JOR. NEW CABLE CO.	15.9	0.00	3	1300	1136	0.88	0.87	0.01
	2.360	1.750	EL -RAY READY WEAR	9	0.00	3	1750	3000	1.79	1.77	0.02
	1.380	1.080	TRVL. TOROCCO	27.8	0.00	8	3078	3623	1.17	1.18	0.01
+	1.440	0.900	UNION CH. 6 VEG.	28.2	0.00	16	6750	6045	0.90	0.89	0.01
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR TOTALS											
		INDEX: 116.47	CHANGE: -0.76			183	111860	151986			
GRAND TOTAL											
		INDEX: 151.03	CHANGE: -0.51			316	189645	371697			
PARALLEL MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR MONDAY 28/04/1997											
PART	12 MONTHS	COMPANY'S NAME	P / E	DIV.	NO. OF	NO. OF	VALUE	OPEN	CLOSE	CHANGE	
HIGH	LOW				SHARES	SHARES	JD	PRICE	PRICE		
N	0.670	0.370	CERDIAL GEN. STORAGE	9	0.00	2	650	267	0.41	0.41	0.00
	0.780	0.440	JOR. TRADES FAC.	12.0	0.00	2	2100	945	0.45	0.45	0.00
	0.840	0.670	UNION INV. 50%	66.0	0.00	5	14250	2708	0.69	0.69	0.00
	0.840	0.470	ARAB FID. INVEST.	9	0.00	21	34850	13999	0.66	0.65	0.02
	0.950	0.740	AL-SERAG INV. 75%	9	0.00	8	15200	7751	0.78	0.75	0.03
	0.840	0.200	JOR. INDUS. MARCH-JERCO	9	0.00	1	500	130	0.26	0.26	0.00
	0.740	0.310	ARAB FOOD & INV.	9	0.00	8	5500	3145	0.50	0.50	0.00
	0.690	0.430	ARAB INTL. INV. TRD.	9	0.00	4	2550	1122	0.44	0.44	0.00
	0.720	0.490	KHAY. TEXTILE	9	0.00	3	1600	800	0.51	0.50	0.01
	0.640	0.400	KHAY. TRVL. INV. KANICO	9	0.00	64	122000	82651	0.70	0.66	0.04
	0.980	0.720	JORDAN STEEL	9	0.00	11	10850	7822	0.73	0.72	0.01
	0.660	0.430	ARAB SELECT. JUNK	9	0.00	1	2500	1275	0.51	0.51	0.00
	0.730	0.500	MEDIANE PAPER. TRD.	9	0.00	10	36350	13184	0.61	0.62	0.01
+	1.310	0.870	UNION TOROCCO 65%	8	0.00	2	58	35	0.87	0.86	0.01
	0.770	0.550	RAZI PAPER. TRD.	9	0.00	14	19350	4838	0.60	0.60	0.00
	0.640	0.380	INDUS. ENRG.	7	25.9	4	2415	2415	0.41	0.41	0.00
	0.760	0.760	INDUS. CHRM.	1	0.00	1	250	195	0.78	0.78	0.00
+	0.760	0.580	PEARL SAN. P. CONV.	8	0.00	1	300	168	0.58	0.56	0.02
	0.820	0.590	HEIT. PAPER	1	0.00	1	345	345	0.69	0.69	0.00
	0.870	0.600	MED. EAST COMPLEX	8.7	0.00	1	200	148	0.74	0.74	0.00



# Chang wins 30th career title

ORLANDO (R) — Michael Chang won his fourth title of the year and 30th of his career on Sunday when he triumphed over south African Grant Stafford in the \$289,250 U.S. men's clay court championships.

The top-seeded Chang, ranked third in the world, needed one hour and 44 minutes to overcome the unseeded Stafford 4-6, 6-2, 6-1.

Chang collected the top prize of \$37,500 and will rise to number two in the ATP Tour rankings. He has won 21 of his last 22 matches this year, the only loss in that stretch coming to Spain's Sergi Bruguera in key Biscayne last month.

Stafford, who was looking for his first career title, took away \$22,000 as runner-up. It was Stafford's third appearance in an ATP tour final without a victory. All three have been on different surfaces — grass, hard courts and clay.

Chang's serve, erratic all week, troubled him in the first set with Stafford, ranked 73. Chang hit three double-faults in the ninth game to drop serve and Stafford served out the set 6-4 with a backhand cross-court winner. Chang turned up the energy in the second set, going for more winners and breaking Stafford in the second and eighth games to win the set 6-2 when the South African missed a backhand.



Michael Chang

Stafford could not capitalise after breaking Chang at love in the first game of the third set. He dropped serve on a volley error in the next game and he visibly sagged. Stafford, 25, began making easy errors and Chang moved easily to a 5-1 lead, breaking him for the third time in the set.

Chang needed two match points to clinch the victory, winning the third set 6-1 with an ace.

"Grant played some tough tennis even in the second and third sets," said Chang, who improved to 3-0

against Stafford. "The score doesn't reflect it, but it was pretty tight. He was going for his shots and he was making them. The whole match I always felt a lot of pressure from him."

Chang said he took a leaf out of Stafford's book to turn things around. "I learned a little from him," Chang said. "He was always attacking my second serve so I thought I should attack his second serve and return the favour."

Stafford said his failure to break Chang at the start of the second set made the dif-

ference. "That was a big point in the match and could have turned things around," said Stafford, who was ranked 282 at the end of 1995 before his dramatic improvement.

"If I could have won that first game it could have been a different story. After that he definitely picked it up. The second set was going his way. I figured I'd hang in there and see if he'd make a couple of mistakes and let me back in the door, but he didn't. In the third set I just couldn't get going."

## Rios triumphs in Monte Carlo

MONACO (AFP) — Seventh-seed Marcelo Rios of Chile woo the \$2.3 million Monte Carlo Open here Sunday, defeating 12th-seeded Spaniard Alex Corretja 6-4, 6-3, 6-3 in the final before a 10,000 crowd.

Ponytailed left-hander Rios, 21 and number eight on the ATP computer recorded his first "Super 9" tournament win as he came through the entire event without losing a set, winning the final in 2hrs 13min.

Corretja had himself reached the final without dropping a set, but he never came to terms with Rios' aggressiveness and confidence.

"I started the match really well and that gave me a real boost," Rios explained. "I served and returned well throughout."

"I learned today it is the tournament's centenary and I was very proud to hear the Chilean national anthem being played, which I'd only heard before at Davis Cup matches, never at other tournaments."

He added he hoped the win would set him up for a good showing at next month's French Open.

Corretja said Rios had played by far the better tennis and admitted that he had had trouble coping with the wind.

"I've played a lot of matches in recent weeks and I wasn't as well on my game today as in recent days. I served very badly."

In the first set, Rios immediately broke Corretja's serve and held his own to go 2-0 up before his opponent bailed him back to 2-2.

But a superb drop volley by Rios handed him a 3-2 lead and a further break put him firmly in the driving seat as he went on to wrap up the first set in 44 minutes.

The Chilean again managed an early break in the second and raced into a 5-2 lead before losing his serve. But he rounded off the set with a service break to love.

Rios kept the heat on in the third set and finally came through 6-3 after Corretja had briefly staved off the inevitable in saving four match points.

## Schumacher and Irvine boost Ferrari challenge

IMOLA (R) — Double world champion Michael Schumacher issued a message of hope for Ferrari fans after emerging encouraged and optimistic from Sunday's San Marino Grand Prix.

When the pandemonium had subsided after Heinz-Harald Frentzen's victory ahead of Schumacher and Ferrari teammate Eddie Irvine, the double world champion was convinced the Italian team were poised to mount a serious title bid.

"Of course, I congratulate Heinz-Harald on a great race," he said. "But at the moment, we are the only team that can match the pace of the Williams cars in a race and I am very pleased with this. We have closed the gap."

"But we have a few modifications coming soon which will put us in a position to try and pass them. We are not as far away as we were and our hard work is paying off. The changes which are on the way will give us the step up that we need."

While fellow German Frentzen celebrated his maiden victory in his 52nd Grand Prix and his first points of the year after replacing world champion Damon Hill at Williams, Schumacher and Ferrari appeared to have the broader smiles.

Ferrari's sporting director Jean Todt explained why.

"We are closing the gap on Williams. We are closer to them than we were and it proves that all our hard work is starting to pay off. Both of the drivers had a good race, the team worked very well and once again our cars proved to be reliable."

On Monday and Tuesday, the team were to test at their Fiorano track in preparation for the Monaco Grand Prix on May 11 and

given Williams' poor record and wretched luck in the Mediterranean principality in recent years, will go there full of hope for their first win of the season.

Unusually, for Ferrari, it is their reliability and consistency which is paying off this year and much of that is due to the work of new technical director Ross Brawn, who joined from Benetton during the winter.

The team have scored points in every race and, after four of the 17 rounds of this year's Constructors' Championship, are second with 24 points behind Williams on 30. In the drivers' title race, Villeneuve leads with 20 while Schumacher is second on 14.

Williams team boss Frank Williams has recognised the threat and will be concentrating his team harder than ever on securing their first Monaco win in more than a decade.

Frentzen, who emerged from Schumacher's shadow as two Germans topped the podium for the first time in the history of the championship, is now expected to build on the surge of confidence his victory will bring.

But, even if he can wring the best out of the Williams car now that he is more comfortable with its set-up and handling, it is unlikely he will resist the scrap for the drivers' title that is likely to develop between Villeneuve and Michael Schumacher.

"It was very disappointing for me not to get any points," said Villeneuve. "I had a strong car all weekend. Now I just want to get on with it — and I am looking forward to racing at Monaco again."

## Pettitte becomes first 5-game winner

NEW YORK (R) — Andy Pettitte fought off illness on Sunday to become the first five-game winner in the Major Leagues this season as the New York Yankees beat the Chicago White Sox 7-1.

Pettitte (5-0) allowed one run on four hits over 7 2/3 innings and Paul O'Neill supplied the offence with a homer and four RBI in the Yankees' victory.

"Yesterday I felt fine but about the third inning (of Saturday's game) I felt like I was going to pass out so they sent me home," said Pettitte, who was battling a fever. "I was in bed yesterday from 4:00 in the afternoon until 10:00 this morning."

"I was pretty close (to not pitching). But I was determined not to miss a start. When the game started, my stomach was hurting and I felt nauseous, but (Yankee trainer) Gene (Monahan) fixed me up something to drink and I felt good after that."

Pettitte joined Yankee pitching coach Mel Stottlemyre, who did it in 1969 and 1974, as the only Yankees to notch five wins in the season's opening month.

Chicago starter Doug Drake (1-3) was tagged for five runs — four earned — and four hits in 3 2/3 innings.

In Toronto, Randy Johnson allowed one run and six hits over eight innings to notch his 15th straight victory over two seasons and Alex Rodriguez homered and drove in both Seattle runs as the red-hot Mariners beat the Toronto Blue Jays 2-1.

Johnson (3-0), who has



Kansas City Royals shortstop Jay Bell (L) points to Oakland A's Jose Canseco's foot after Canseco was called safe stealing second base during the 7th inning of play in Oakland. Kansas City defeated Oakland 7-1 (Reuters photo)

won 28 of his last 30 decisions, walked one and struck out nine. The 15 straight wins by Johnson is two short of the American league record.

Norm Charlton tossed a scoreless ninth for his seventh save as the Mariners won for the sixth time in seven games.

Robert Person (0-1) was the hard-luck loser.

In Baltimore, Bill Haseltman hit a two-run homer, doubled three times and drove in four runs to lead a 19-hit attack as the Boston Red Sox homed the Baltimore Orioles 13-7.

Troy, Wil Cordero, Mo Vaughn and Tim Lincecum each hit solo homers for the Red Sox.

In Milwaukee, Dave Nilsson singled in Mark

Loretta with one out in the bottom of the ninth as the Milwaukee Brewers rallied for a 6-5 victory over the Cleveland Indians.

The Brewers, who outthrew the Indians 13-8, trailed 4-0 heading into the fifth.

"I think that was a big relief for me and the team," said Nilsson. "It's a great feeling for the team to be able to come back from where we were, 4-0 down, and take it from there."

At Minnesota, Warren Newson slugged a two-run homer in a five-run eighth inning as the Texas Rangers captured their fifth straight game, 7-3 over the Minnesota Twins.

A double by Rusty Greer, an infield single by Dean Palmer and Lee Stevens' sacrifice fly tied it at 3-3 in the eighth.

Newson followed with his first homer to give Texas a two-run lead and the Rangers added two more in the inning.

"I was hoping to break out today," said Newson, who was hitting .077 entering the game. "I've been kind of struggling."

Newson finished 3-for-4 with three RBI.

In Anaheim, Jim Edmonds' single with two outs in the bottom of the ninth scored Luis Alica and lifted the Anaheim Angels to a 6-5 victory over the Detroit Tigers.

Alica led off the ninth with a single off Mike Myers (0-2), was sacrificed to second and advanced to third on a groundout. Edmonds followed with a liner over the head of centre fielder Brian Hunter for the game-winning run.

Reliever Mike James (2-2) won it for the Angels, who tied the game at 5-5 with a run in the eighth.

Bubba Trammell, Travis Fryman, Brian Hunter and Tony Clark homered for Detroit.

In Oakland, Tim Lincecum tossed a six-hitter for his first complete game of the season as the Kansas City Royals defeated the Oakland Athletics 7-1 in the rubber game of a three-game series.

AMERICAN LEAGUE			
Seattle	2	Toronto	1
Boston	13	Baltimore	7
NY Yankees	7	Chi White Sox	1
Milwaukee	6	Cleveland	5
Texas	7	Minnesota	3
Kansas City	7	Oakland	1
Anaheim	6	Detroit	5

NATIONAL LEAGUE			
Atlanta	2	San Diego	0
NY Mets	5	Montreal	3
St Louis	6	Colorado	2
Pittsburgh	7	Chicago Cubs	0
San Francisco	3	Houston	2
Florida	4	Los Angeles	3
Philadelphia	4	Cincinnati	postponed-rain

## Maddux continues streak with win over Padres

ATLANTA (R) — Greg Maddux and the Braves beat the rain and the Padres on Sunday as Atlanta took a 2-0 rain-shortened victory over San Diego to maintain their Major League best record by completing a three-game sweep.

Maddux allowed just one hit and Chipper Jones accounted for the game's only runs with a two-out, two-run double in the third in a game called after the 4 1/2 inning minimum.

Maddux (3-1) has not allowed an earned run in 29 innings and Atlanta won their sixth in a row and 11th in 12 games at Turner field

as they improved their season record to 17-5.

"We knew the rain was coming, we thought we had a couple of hours, but it came sooner," said Braves manager Bobby Cox.

In Houston, Damon Berryhill's one-hop single over the head of first baseman Jeff Bagwell scored J.T. Snow with the go-ahead run in the top of the seventh as the San Francisco Giants edged the Houston Astros 3-2.

"It was an ugly at-bat," Berryhill said of his decisive hit against Astros starter Shane Reynolds (3-2).

San Francisco starter Osvaldo Hernandez (3-1) notched the victory as the surprising Giants improved to 16-5.

At Florida, Edgar Renteria's one-out single in the bottom of the ninth scored Cliff Floyd just ahead of Raul Mondesi's throw as the Florida Marlins completed a three-game sweep of the Los Angeles Dodgers with a 4-3 victory.

In Montreal, Rey Ordenez delivered a bases-loaded single in the top of the 10th inning as the New York Mets defeated Montreal 5-3 to end the Expos' six-game winning streak.

In St Louis, Donovan Osborne allowed five hits over seven innings and Delino Deshaies and Ray Lankford had two-run singles as the St Louis Cardinals ended the Colorado Rockies' team-record eight-game road winning streak with a 6-2 victory.

In Chicago, Jason Schmidt combined with two relievers on a five-hitter and had two hits, including an RBI double in the seventh inning, to lead the Pittsburgh Pirates to a 7-0 victory over the Chicago Cubs.

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PHILADELPHIA "2"

Glenn Close ... in

101 DALMATIANS

Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30

CINEMA

TEL:699238

PLAZA

Eddie Murphy ... in

METRO

Shows: 12:30, 3:15, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30

Demi Moore ... in

STRIPTease

Show: 5:00 pm.

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CONCORD

CONCORD "1"

Steven Segal ... in

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Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30

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Michael Jordan ... in

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Steffi Graf

## Graf set for comeback at German Open

BONN (R) — Steffi Graf will return to competitive tennis at next month's German Open after an injury layoff of more than three months, the Berlin tournament's organisers said on Monday.

Eberhard Wensky, the director of the tournament which begins on May 12, said Graf had confirmed she would take part.

The German has been out of action with a knee injury since the beginning of February. She lost her status as world number one to Martina Hingis of Switzerland last month.

## Dreams come true for hard-hit Barnsley

BARNSELEY, England (R) — Its coal mines are disused relics, its self-confidence has taken a battering and it has been written off as "the worst place to live in Britain."

But Barnsley, the bun of a thousand jokes and 20,000 job cuts, finally has a soccer team which is up there with the best.

On Saturday, Barnsley won promotion to the top tier of English football for the first time in their 110-year history.

A 2-0 home victory over Bradford ensured that next season, the team from England's hard-hit South Yorkshire coalfields will rub shoulders with the likes of Manchester United, Liverpool and Arsenal.

It is a remarkable feat for a club which has spent its entire life drifting between the lower divisions of the football league playing to pitifully small crowds.

And it has helped galvanise a community which, since the turbulent and at times violent year-long

British miners' strike of 1984-85, has witnessed the closure of its final 15 pits at the cost of 20,000 jobs.

"It means a lot to the people of this town. There's a lot of old men very emotional down there," an equally emotional Barnsley player-manager Danny Wilson said as the club's fans swarmed on to the pitch to celebrate Saturday's historic victory.

"It's much more than football. They've had hard times here over the past decade and this is the sort of relief they needed. Now they can look forward to enjoying top flight football next season."

Wilson, a former Northern Ireland international who took over at Barnsley's modest oakwell ground in 1994, is the man largely responsible for the club's success this season.

For less than a million pounds (\$1.6 million) he has assembled a side which has not only reached the promised land of the Premier League, but has done so with panache.

The favourite chant on the

Oakwell terraces this season — "it's just like watching Brazil" — may be stretching the imagination a little, but there is no doubting the calibre of Barnsley's passing game.

"At times, when it's been difficult to play football, my players have got themselves out of some tricky situations by doing just that," Wilson said.

"I think a lot of people would have been happy simply to get to the play-offs this season, but I believe in setting my standards high."

Neil Warnock, manager of rival First Division Oldham who played for Barnsley in the 1970s when they were in the old Fourth Division, said: "When I look around and think back to how the club was when I was here... What they've done is unbelievable."

"And I don't think they'll just be along for the ride in the Premier League either. I think if Danny can get two or three new players in over the summer they can stay up."

"Good luck to them. They're a friendly bunch and it's a very good club."

Although Barnsley's league record since their foundation in 1887 has been one of sustained mediocrity, they have won the F.A. Cup. In 1912 a dour side famed for shin-splitting tackles and an unerring ability to grind out goalless league draws brought the trophy back to Oakwell.

The cup-winning side was forever known as "Battling Barnsley", and the image has stuck.

Oakwell's most famous former player, Danny Blanchflower, left in the late 1940s complaining about the relentless emphasis on physical training at a club which traditionally drew the bulk of its players from the tough world of the coal mines.

But those days are gone and the modern Barnsley are as eclectic as the other sides they will meet in the Premier League next season.

They boast a tricky Trinidadian striker with a name straight out of Hollywood — Clint Marcelle — a classy Dutch centre-back in Arjan De Zeeuw, and several players discarded by bigger clubs and given a new lease of life by Wilson.

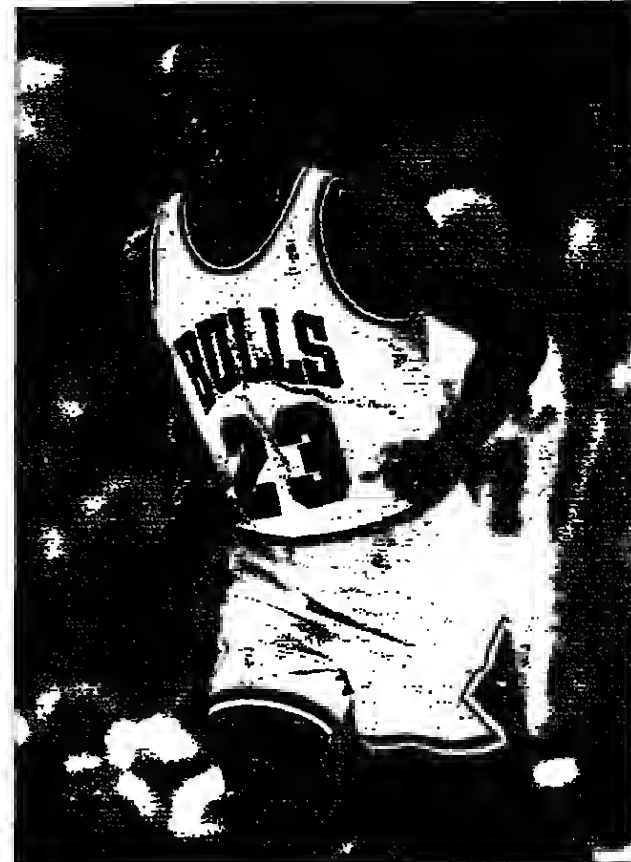
Oakwell itself has one foot in the brave new world of the Premier League and another in Barnsley's past.

Two of the ground's four stands would grace any top flight club. The other two — all crush barriers, wooden seats and outdoor toilets — are straight out of the "Battling Barnsley" days of 1912.

Few of the top sides will relish the visit to Oakwell, where Wilson's side will jump at the opportunity to prove themselves against teams from England's more fashionable footballing cities.



Detroit Pistons Grant Hill gets a hug from teammate Aaron McKie after beating the Atlanta Hawks 93-80 to even their Eastern Conference playoffs 1-1 in Atlanta. Hill was the Pistons high scorer with 25 points (Reuters photo)



Chicago Bulls' Michael Jordan runs downcourt following a basket in the fourth quarter of NBA playoff game in Chicago. With Jordan's 55 points, Chicago won the game 109-104 and leads the Bulls 2-0 in the best of five series (Reuters photo)

## Brilliant Jordan stops Bullets for 109-104 NBA playoff win

CHICAGO (R) — Michael Jordan took matters into his own hands Sunday, scoring 55 points and utterly dominating the fourth quarter as the Chicago Bulls stopped the Washington Bullets 109-104 for a 2-0 playoff series lead.

Jordan, who shot 22-of-35 from the field and 10-for-10 from the free throw line, scored 20 of Chicago's 23 points in the fourth quarter.

"When I get in a zone I just go with it," Jordan said. "The team knows me and when I get like that, they just let me go. I get that feeling they know I'm gonna score. So do I."

The Bulls can complete their sixth Eastern Conference first-round sweep in seven years with a win on Wednesday. Washington's first home playoff game in nine years.

Jordan was simply sensational, driving through the Bullets team at will and hitting shots from all over the court.

"I just got into that mode and I couldn't get out of it," Jordan said about his scoring spree.

"I think this was a great basketball game," Bullets coach Bernie Bickerstaff said. "We did everything

conceivable that we could do to contain Michael."

"He basically put them on his shoulders. He showed tonight that he's the best basketball player who's playing today."

"The Bullets are a fabulous team of the future," Jordan said. "They are giving us a good run for our money."

In Miami, the Heat administered a second successive embarrassing defeat to the Orlando Magic, pounding their intrastate rivals 104-87 to take a 2-0 lead in their Eastern Conference first-round series.

Miami, which has never won a playoff series, can complete a sweep with a win at Orlando in game three on Tuesday.

The Heat took early control for the second straight game, using a 22-3 burst at the start of the second quarter. In game one, Miami led 35-10 after one period.

"Today was a little surprising," Miami's Dan Majerle said. "We thought they would come out with fire in their eyes."

Penny Hardaway scored 26 points for Orlando, on the verge of being swept from the playoffs for a fourth straight year.

In Seattle, Shawn Kemp

had 23 points and 15 rebounds and Gary Payton added 23 points as the Supersonics levelled their Western Conference first-round series with a vengeance, routing the Phoenix Suns 122-78.

The 44-point margin of victory was Seattle's largest in the playoffs, and the worst ever for Phoenix, who stunned the Sonics in the opener.

"We knew we had to be aggressive, penetrate and attack them," said guard Gary Payton, who steered Seattle to their highest point total of the season.

Rex Chapman, who set a playoff mark with nine three-pointers and scored a career-high 42 points in game one, led the Suns with 18 points.

In Los Angeles, Shaquille O'Neal scored 30 points as the hot-shooting Los Angeles Lakers raced to a 107-93 victory over the Portland Trail Blazers and a 2-0 lead in their Western Conference first-round series.

O'Neal, who scored a playoff career-high 46 points in game one, shot 11-of-21 from the field.

Rasheed Wallace scored 20 points to lead the Blazers, who were 3-1 against Los Angeles during the sea-

son.

In Atlanta, Grant Hill scored 25 points and made a key block of centre Dikembe Mutombo in the last two minutes as the Detroit Pistons beat the Atlanta Hawks 93-80 and evened their Eastern Conference first-round series at one game a piece.

Aaron McKie fuelled a pivotal 11-0 run and Joe Dumars hit a pair of clutch jumpers down the stretch for the pistons.

"In the playoffs, you have to attack the basket," said Pistons coach Doug Collins. "In game one, they did that. In game two, we did that."

Mutombo, who had 26 points in the opener, scored 17 for the Hawks. He suffered a strained groin in the first quarter but continued to play.

"(It happened with) two minutes to go in the first quarter," said Mutombo. "When Grant Hill drove in the lane and kicked me straight in between the legs. I was crying about the pain. I'm just having pain, even sitting down and walking. But I decided I was going to play."

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Q. 1 - As South, vulnerable, you hold:  
♠ A J 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 ♠ A J 10 ♣ Q 8 6 5 4 3 2 10 4 Void  
The bidding has proceeded:  
NORTH EAST SOUTH WEST  
1 ♠ Pass 2 ♠ Pass  
What do you bid now?  
Q. 2 - As South, vulnerable, you hold:  
♠ A Q 8 7 6 4 ♣ A Q 3 2 ♠ A A 9  
Your right-hand opponent opens the bidding with one spade. What action do you take?  
Q. 3 - Neither vulnerable, as South you hold:  
♠ A J 2 ♣ A J 5 2 ♠ J 8 ♣ K Q J 9  
The bidding has proceeded:  
NORTH EAST SOUTH WEST  
1 ♠ Pass 1 ♠ Pass  
What do you bid now?  
Q. 4 - As South, vulnerable, you hold:  
♠ K 7 4 ♣ K Q J 8 5 4 3 2 10 4 Void  
The bidding has proceeded:  
NORTH EAST SOUTH WEST  
1 ♠ Pass 2 ♠ Pass  
What action do you take?  
Q. 5 - Both vulnerable, as South you hold:  
♠ 10 7 2 ♣ K J 8 5 4 ♠ 6 5 4 3  
The bidding has proceeded:  
NORTH EAST SOUTH WEST  
1 ♠ Pass 2 ♠ Pass  
What action do you take?  
Q. 6 - East-West vulnerable, as South you hold:  
♠ 7 3 ♣ Q J 8 6 5 ♠ Q J 5 4 ♠ 7 3  
The bidding has proceeded:  
NORTH EAST SOUTH WEST  
1 NT Pass 2 NT Pass  
What action do you take?

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### JORDAN PHOSPHATE MINES CO., LTD. ANNOUNCES THE INVITATION TO TENDER NO.: 22F/97

JPMC ANNOUNCES THE INVITATION TO BID NO.22F/97 FOR THE:-

Design, Manufacture, Supply, Delivery to Site, Construction of Civil Workers, Erection, Testing and Commissioning (on Turn Key Basis) of:-

- 1- Dedusting Plant
- 2- Telescopic Chutes

The tender documents are available at JPMC offices in Amman, Supply Department, until 2:00 p.m. local time TUESDAY 20th May, 1997. Application for documents should be accompanied by a non-refundable fee of JD (150) for each set of tender documents.

The closing date for submitting bids is 12.00 hours local time Thursday, 19th JUNE, 1997.

SAMEH MADANI  
MANAGING DIRECTOR





EGYPTIAN PHARAONIC FESTIVITIES: Egyptian fish vender sells salty fish which Egyptians have eaten during "Sham Al Nassem" feast since Pharaonic times. Both Egyptian Muslims and Christians celebrated on Monday the feast to mark the start of the season of spring (AFP photo)

## Turkish army unhappy at Erbakan stalling — press

ANKARA (Agencies) — Turkey's powerful army is displeased at Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan's attempts to delay a planned anti-Islamist crackdown that has split his government, the Turkish press said on Monday.

The Milliyet daily quoted an unnamed senior military officer as criticising Mr. Erbakan's Islamist Welfare Party for being reluctant to comply with secular measures demanded by the military-dominated National Security Council.

"The prime minister accepts everything in the National Security Council and says he agrees but then Welfare spokesmen outside say the

complete opposite," the officer said.

Two ministers from the conservative wing of the Welfare-led coalition resigned at the weekend because of Mr. Erbakan's stalling.

The anonymous officer accused Mr. Erbakan, secularist Turkey's first Islamist leader, of "takkiye" — a practice under which Muslims can hide their true feelings for the good of the faith. "Erbakan is practising takkiye. He is trying to form a trap, play for time," he said.

The prime minister signed a National Security Council communiqué on Saturday agreeing to go ahead with curbs on the role of religion in

public life.

But senior Welfare Party members have said they will try to block any bid by parliament to restrict religious education, a key army demand.

In continuing efforts to crackdown on Islamist activities, Turkish police raided illegal Islamist education centres, security officials said on Monday.

It was the first confirmed report of concrete action since the secularist army demanded the crackdown against an Islamist revival two months ago. Halting illegal Islamist education is one of the generals' main demands.

Police in the western province of Bursa swooped on

seven buildings housing unofficial Koranic education courses on Sunday, a spokesman for the governor's office said.

"The courses were closed," the spokesman told Reuters by telephone. "They were found to be operating outside the writ of the religious affairs directorate," he said.

The Islamist prime minister signed a National Security Council communiqué on Saturday agreeing to go ahead with the curbs on the role of religion in public life.

But senior officials in Mr. Erbakan's Welfare Party have said they will try to block any bid by parliament to restrict religious school education.

## Iraq announces larger food rations for May

BAGHDAD (AFP) — Iraq has imported 420,000 tonnes of food since March 20 under an oil-for-food agreement with the United Nations, a U.N. spokesman here said Monday.

"Foodstuffs that have arrived in Iraq up until Monday have reached 420,000 tonnes," Eric Falt, spokesman for the U.N. coordinator of humanitarian activities in Iraq, told AFP.

He said most of the food was wheat, rice, vegetable oil, cereals and milk for children, adding that trucks laden with food were continuing to cross into Iraq from both Turkey and Jordan.

Mr. Falt said that 24 of the 120 food contracts approved by the U.N. Sanctions Committee under the terms of the oil-for-food deal were being implemented.

Under U.N. Security Council Resolution 986, the oil-for-food agreement, Iraq may sell up to \$2 billion in crude oil the first six months to buy food and medicines, defray U.N. costs and

pay war reparations.

The agreement was the first easing of the international embargo on Iraq since it invaded Kuwait in August 1990. Iraq started pumping oil Dec. 10 and the first deliveries to Iraq under the deal came on Mar. 20.

However, a U.N. official here said no deliveries of medicine had arrived in Iraq under the deal, but that at least 60 contracts for medicine had been approved by the sanctions committee.

Iraq has accused the United Nations, under U.S. influence, of deliberately delaying the delivery of goods.

Mr. Falt also praised an Iraqi government decision on Sunday to increase food rations for May because of the extra food coming into the country under the humanitarian deal.

The Ministry of Commerce said it will increase the amounts of rice, vegetable oil, milk for children, cereal and soap the government distributes for the month.

## Algerians immigrate as result of violence

ALGIERS (AFP) — More than 400,000 Algerians have left their country in the past six years and not returned, according to figures compiled by the National Statistics Office, published Sunday by the daily Al Khabar.

The exodus began with the rise of Islamist influence and accelerated as the country became engulfed in violence, but appears to have fallen off since exit visas have been made more difficult to obtain.

In 1990, when the now outlawed National Salvation Front (FIS) won local elections, 12,000 Algerians left the country. The following year, that figure went up to 95,000. The FIS was poised to make a mass entry into parliament in the January 1992 elections that were cancelled by the military regime.

In 1992, at the outbreak of bloody confrontations between security forces and armed Islamists, 106,769 Algerians went abroad, and another 112,759 left for good when the slaughtering of women, intellectuals, journalists and university academics began.

The flow out of the coun-

try ebbed in 1994 to 48,285, and dwindled to only 29,496 in 1995 due to tough measures imposed on visa requirements.

The exodus has amounted to a serious brain drain for Algeria, with highly qualified civil servants, doctors, university professors, architects and engineers opting in vast numbers to flee the climate of terror gripping the country.

Al Khabar cited the example of more than 1,000 teachers who have left the University of Oran, in western Algeria, the country's second largest city.

The figures do not take into account illegal immigration. For an idea of the scale of the phenomenon, the paper said it was enough to visit trial proceedings, particularly in border towns, to see how many people were appearing on charges of attempting to leave the territory illegally.

At least 60,000 people are estimated to have died in the country's civil war and violence has been intensifying in recent weeks ahead of general elections scheduled for June.

## Baker's efforts in Western Sahara let go 85 prisoners

SMARA, Algeria (R) — Special U.N. envoy James Baker's visit to the desolate desert refugee camp of Smara in Algeria on Sunday was rewarded with the promised release of 85 Moroccan prisoners of war by the Sahara independence movement.

The former U.S. secretary of state, who was making his last stop on a fact-finding mission to unblock the peace process in the Western Sahara, said he was optimistic about solving the smoldering conflict, which has threatened to rekindle into war.

"This is, of course, a very tough problem but it is not in my opinion hopeless or I wouldn't otherwise be here," Mr. Baker told a news conference after meeting with leaders of the Polisario Front, Western Sahara's independence movement.

He announced that the Polisario Front was releasing the 85 prisoners in a surprise move that he said was "a very, very generous humanitarian gesture of support for our mission."

The Polisario Front has been holding some 2,000 prisoners of war, some of them for more than 20 years.

The Western Sahara, a former Spanish colony that Morocco claims, is a mass of sand in northwestern Africa that has 1,500 kilometres of Atlantic coastline with accompanying fishing rights and a wealth of phosphates and other minerals.

The Saharawi people, nomads who have struggled for more than 20 years for independence in the area, greeted Mr. Baker's visit with an almost desperate sense of hope.

Tens of thousands of refugees lined the dusty road into Smara welcoming Mr. Baker's convoy of jeeps like a liberating army with women ululating, children cheering, men in flowing robes giving peace signs and everyone waving the Western Sahara flag.

Some 2,000 troops also stood at attention, many of them aged and bent, veterans of the war started in 1976 when the Polisario took up arms against Morocco and Mauritania and ended by a U.N.-brokered ceasefire in September 1991.

The ceasefire called for a referendum on the status of the area, but was delayed again and again and finally abandoned in 1995 after a continuing dispute over who was eligible to vote.

A U.N. official, who spoke to Reuters on condition of anonymity, said Mr. Baker's mission was to find a post-referendum solution with some sort of federal state status for Western Sahara rather than full independence — the most likely outcome.

The Polisario and the Saharawi people remain vehemently opposed to anything but a referendum on independence based on the

last Spanish census made before Moroccans started moving in.

"There must be complete independence or a referendum based on the Spanish census. There is no other criteria," Chief Council to the Sahara Presidency Mohammed Uldzio told Reuters after meeting Mr. Baker.

Mr. Baker, who arrived from Mauritania, was on his first visit to the region since U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan appointed him as his personal envoy for Western Sahara last month.

He also visited Morocco and held talks with Algerian leaders in Algiers.

On Sunday he met Polisario leader and president of the self-proclaimed Arab Sahara Democratic Republic, Mohammed Abdul Aziz, in Smara instead of the Polisario headquarters in Tindouf after a sand storm made travel in the area difficult.

Mr. Baker, whose diplomatic experience in the Gulf war and the Middle East is seen as a useful experience for piecing together Western Sahara, said all parties involved had expressed full support for his mission.

"I am convinced that the people in this region are overly weary with this issue and this problem and are ready for a just, lasting and definitive solution," Mr. Baker said.

## Teen killed by Israeli soldiers mourned

THARAZ, West Bank (AP) — Hundreds of Palestinians marched Monday in mourning for an 18-year-old killed in clashes with Israeli soldiers in a West Bank village outside Hebron.

Issam Aqadneh was killed Sunday night when Israeli troops passing through the village of Tharaz and opened fire on Palestinians throwing stones and firebombs. The high school senior was buried late Sunday night. Two other Palestinians were wounded in the clashes.

Hundreds of tearful, angry students marched from their schools Monday to the mourning house set up by Aqadneh's family, shouting "God is great" and "our response will be in Tel Aviv" — a reference to last month's suicide bombing that killed three Israeli women in Tel Aviv.

Graffiti called Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu a terrorist and told Israel to "pull out your soldiers from our land."

Tharaz is in the part of the West Bank still under Israeli army control.

At the mourning house, Aqadneh's family and classmates clung to each other Monday, sobbing. Palestinian flags hung on the walls.

"We are shocked and so sad that we lost Issam, but we are proud of him," said classmate Mazen Khalailah, crying. "We hope that we will follow in his path, because instead of taking his degree in life, he took his degree in heaven."

"God willing, we will take revenge," said Aqadneh's cousin Hassan. "Our destiny is to be on this land and to fight the Israelis."

The mourners said Aqadneh was the first villager killed in clashes with Israelis — even during the 1987-1993 Palestinian uprising that claimed hundreds of Palestinian lives.

## Albright sends letters ahead of EU meeting

WASHINGTON (AFP) — Secretary of State Madeleine Albright sent letters to her European counterparts over the weekend to urge them to take steps to confront Iran at their meeting in Luxembourg Tuesday.

"Our view is that there ought to be room for the United States and Europe to work together to fashion a realistic policy towards Iran," State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns said Monday.

He declined to discuss the contents of the letters sent to foreign ministers from the 15-nation European Union (EU) were to discuss the April 10 ruling by a German court implicating Tehran's top leaders in the 1992 assassination of four Kurdish dissidents in a Berlin restaurant.

The United States, which severed diplomatic relations with Iran in 1980, has accused Iran of sponsoring international terrorism and of seeking to develop nuclear, biological and chemical weapons capability.

President Bill Clinton slapped an oil embargo on Iran in 1995 that toughened the economic boycott in place since 1980.

The state department acknowledged Monday that the EU was not likely to cut trade ties with Iran but stressed that a transatlantic approach would be more effective in pressing Tehran to change its behaviour.

"I don't think we anticipate that the European Union is going to adopt our policy tomorrow, but we hope that its decisions are realistic and that they're effective," Mr. Burns said.

## Italian opposition on top in local elections

ROME (R) — Italy's main opposition alliance gave Prime Minister Romano Prodi's centre-left coalition a bloody nose in the weekend's major local elections, according to early results released Monday.

The centre-right Freedom Alliance was ahead in the mayoral race in Milan after the first round of voting, ending the separatist Northern League's control of the business capital. The alliance was also winning in the key northern city of Turin.

Mr. Prodi's ruling Olive Tree Coalition was a distant second in both races, leaving it at the mercy of its parliamentary ally, the hard-left Communist Refoundation, which stood alone in many of the local constituencies and secured strong support.

The elections for mayors and local councils in more than 1,100 towns and cities was the first big test for Mr. Prodi and his backers since they triumphed in last April's general election.

A year later, and the Olive Tree has paid the price. It has not just lost a few leaves, but whole branches," La Repubblica newspaper said in a front

page editorial.

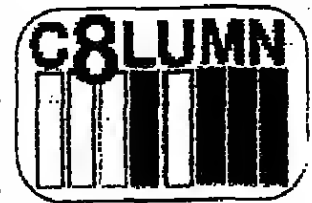
The government's popularity has suffered in recent months from resentment at tax hikes it has brought in to cut the budget deficit and try to squeeze Italy into the first wave of countries to join Europe's planned single currency.

Mr. Prodi and other leading government figures declined to comment on Sunday's election and were waiting for the full result.

Counting from the vote, for which 9.4 million voters — or about one-fifth of the national electorate — were eligible, began early Monday.

A run-off will be held on May 11 between the two leading contenders for mayor in places where no candidate obtains an absolute majority.

With more than a third of the votes counted in the northern powerhouse Milan, industrialist Gabrielle Albertini of the Freedom Alliance was ahead with 41.5 per cent of the vote against 27.8 per cent for Aldo Fumagalli of the Olive Tree.



## Both wives compete to save husband

DUBAI (R) — Two wives of a Saudi man suffering from a kidney disease competed to donate their kidneys to save their husband and the donor was chosen by drawing lots, a Saudi newspaper said on Monday. "There was a degree of competition between the women as to who the donor should be," the English-language Arab News said. "(The) hospital administration was forced to draw lots between the two wives," it said. "The second wife... won. However, the first wife insisted that the chance of donating her kidney should have been hers."

## Lord Byro, Miss Money Penny battle in British elections

LONDON (R) — Screaming Lord Sutch isn't standing, but his luxuriant hair will be filled by Happiness Stan, Lord Byro and Miss Money Penny, a transvestite who stands 2.4 metres tall in platform shoes and birdcage hat. There are a record 3,717 candidates standing in Britain's May 1 parliamentary election. 769 more than in 1992, and many of them are standing as independents or for fringe parties like the Rainbow Dream Ticket Party, Sutch, Britain's longest-serving party leader, has stepped down to look after his ailing mother. But hi, Monster Raving Loony Party fights on under its motto, "Vote for insanity — you know it makes sense."

## Texas sheriff gets his own armoured division

TYLER (R) — Sheriff J.B. Smith may only be a small-town Texas lawman, but he has acquired a big new weapon in his war on crime — a pair of 13-tonne armoured personnel carriers. Smith picked up the free army surplus truck-driven carriers under a federal programme giving old military equipment to civilian police forces for anti-narcotics efforts. He said they could come in handy in a wide variety of crises. "We could use them in hostage situations, dangerous standoffs and even for crowd control," Smith, sheriff for east Texas's generally quiet Smith County, said last week.

## Doctors, scientists, teachers top prestige poll

WASHINGTON (R) — Doctors, scientists, teachers, engineers and members of the clergy are the most prestigious occupations in the eyes of Americans, according to a Harris poll. They are followed by police officers, military officers and — in a finding that may surprise some — members of Congress. At the bottom of the prestige list are union leaders, entertainers, athletes, artists and accountants, said the survey of 1,006 adults taken between March 26 and April 1. Harris has been sounding out Americans on how they perceive occupations in terms of prestige since 1977. During that time, teachers have enjoyed the biggest boost. The level of Americans who believe teachers have "very great" prestige has surged to 46 per cent from 29 per cent. By contrast, those who think lawyers have "very great" prestige has tumbled to 19 per cent from 36 per cent during the two-decade period. Similarly, the rating for scientists has fallen to 51 per cent from 66 per cent.

## Che Guevara becomes business marketing tool

MIAMI (AFP) — In the ultimate irony for one of Latin America's most renowned guerrilla leaders, Ernesto "Che" Guevara has become a marketing tool for high-powered capitalists 30 years after his death. The marketing of Che Guevara has taken on a new dimension this year, with the upcoming 30th anniversary of his execution in Bolivia on October 8, 1967.

Several new books and movies are out or due out that examine Che Guevara's life and legacy, including "Che Guevara: a revolutionary life," by American journalist Jon Lee Anderson, which is in U.S. book-

stores. "La vida en rojo (Life in red)" by Mexican political scientist Jorge Castaneda, was published last week in Buenos Aires and will be published later this year in the United States by Alfred A. Knopf.

A Swiss documentary on Che Guevara premiered last September in New York and several feature films are in the works in Argentina. Director Michael Radford, known for "Il Postino," is working on another for Warner brothers based on the relationship between Haydee Tamara "Tania" Bunka, a German Argentine intelligence agent, and

Che Guevara. The executive producer is Mick Jagger.

There also has been a Che Guevara beer in London, which was taken off the market after the Cuban government objected, and a Swatch watches featuring his face and the Cuban flag; the Cuban government reportedly bought 10,000 from the Swiss manufacturer.

"Che Guevara is the last unplundered icon of the '60s in popular culture, and now can be looted for commercial use in our entertainment culture," says Anderson, author of "Guerrillas," a 1993 book.